DE QUINCEY'S COLLECTED WRITINGS

VOL. IV

BIOGRAPHIES AND BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES

THE

COLLECTED WRITINGS

OF

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE three preceding volumes contain those writings of De Quincey which collectively constitute his AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND LITERARY REMINISCENCES. They carry us on, in a general way, to about the year 1825, when De Quincey had become famous as "The English Opium-Eater," a versatile contributor to London periodicals, but had returned to his home at Grasmere after unsatisfactory trials of residence in London, and had begun to think that, if ever he removed from Grasmere permanently, it must be to Edinburgh. While the volumes make vivid for us, however, the main course of his life to the date indicated,—when he was in the fortieth year of his age,—there are some particulars of his family history through the time traversed about which they have left us uninformed. It may be well, at the present point, to supply this defect, and at the same time to add such particulars of his later family history as may be required, by way of biographical accompaniment and elucidation, here and there, in the series of his writings generally.

Of De Quincey's father we have heard a good deal. We can recollect him as the Manchester merchant, much of an invalid, who died in 1793, at the age of forty, when De Quincey was but a child. Of De Quincey's brothers and sisters we have also heard a good deal. There have been immortalised for us especially those two child-sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, who had died before their father, so that De Quincey's memories of them survived but as mysterious gleams from his dreamy infancy. Nor are we likely to forget either his eldest and all-domineering brother, William,

whose energetic life was cut short when he had not completed his sixteenth year, or that younger brother, Richard, known as "Pink," whose romantic career of sailor-adventure, revealed to the family only in rare glimpses of him when he turned up ashore, was so interesting to De Quincey as running parallel with a considerable portion of his own manhood. There remain, however, two important persons of the *Autobiography* and the *Confessions* respecting whom the information has hardly been sufficient.

(1) *De Quincey's Mother.*—Respecting her it cannot be said that De Quincey has left us quite ignorant. He has even sketched for us her character, and the general tenor of her life to a certain point. We see her,—the Elizabeth Penson who had become the wife of the Manchester merchant in 1778 or thereabouts,—left a widow in 1793, when she was about forty-one years of age, in clear possession of £1600 a year, and conjoint-guardian, with other trustees, under her husband's will, of six surviving children, each of whom had a separate and independent provision. We see her in her continued widowhood, a stately and accomplished English lady, of somewhat Roman severity,—especially after she had become acquainted with Hannah More, and had adopted the strict religious principles of the Clapham Evangelical School, —changing her residence from the Manchester neighbourhood to Bath, and thence to Chester, always the stately and accomplished lady and mixing in the best society, but perplexed not a little by the question of the proper education for her sons, and by the erratic tendencies of two of them. We see her more particularly in her antique residence at Chester, in that month of July 1802 when her brother, Colonel Penson, home from India on furlough, was domiciled with her, and when her son Thomas, then the eldest living, came in upon them imploringly as a fugitive from Manchester Grammar School. To her, with her grave notions of law and decorum, this apparition of her runaway boy, we are told, was like "the opening of the seventh seal in the Revelations"; but, Uncle Penson taking an easier and more soldierly view of the subject, the runaway was not sent back, as he dreaded he might be, but was allowed, after a while, to have as much of a ramble in North Wales, all by himself, as

he could manage on a guinea a week. It was in the following year, 1803, after he had not been heard of for months, and after his Welsh wanderings had been followed by his wild plunge into London and his desperate time of vagrancy and semi-starvation there, that he was tracked, reclaimed, and brought back to Chester, till mother and uncle could decide what should be done with him next. Whoever wants to look at a portrait of De Quincey at this critical epoch of his young life may turn to the vignette in our last volume. It will speak for itself. The deliberations at the Priory, Chester, resulted, as we know, in his being sent to Oxford in the end of 1803, to make the most of University life there on an allowance of £100 a year. From this point forward De Quincey's mother all but vanishes from his autobiographic narrative. Almost all that we hear of her afterwards, and that but incidentally, is that she did not remain much longer at Chester, but removed thence to Somersetshire, in the Bristol neighbourhood, where De Quincey was able to visit her now and then during his years at Oxford, and afterwards from the Lakes, and that finally her residence was again near Bath.——What we have now to remark is that nearly all this information about De Quincey's mother was first given to the world by him in those additions to his *Autobiographic Sketches* and his *Confessions* which were made in 1853 and 1856 for the collective edition of his writings. In the original or 1822 edition of the *Confessions*, and in the series of the *Autobiographic Sketches* as they appeared in Tait's *Edinburgh Magazine* in 1834 and some subsequent years, one seeks in vain for anything equivalent. The reticence there as to De Quincey's mother in her relations to himself is so careful, the suppression of all direct mentions of her so complete, that, had we been left to depend on these alone, we should have had but the faintest image of her or memorial of her existence.——The explanation of this reticence for a while, and of the subsequent amends made for it, is now easy. De Quincey's mother was alive at the time when he first flashed into literary notoriety by his *Confessions of an Opium-Eater;* and she may have read them, as others did, in the published volume of 1822, discerning references to herself which others could not discern, and

having thoughts of her own on the whole subject. She was still alive in those years, from 1834 onwards, when the series of the *Autobiographic Sketches* was running its course in an Edinburgh periodical, and telling more about De Quincey himself and his family than he had previously revealed ; and she remained alive, a venerable old lady, till De Quincey's celebrity was in its fullest orb and he was himself getting old. Her death occurred, we are now able to state, on the 8th of January 1846, at her own house, Weston Lea, Bath ; and she was buried in the Abbey cemetery of that town. She was then in her ninety-third or ninety-fourth year, De Quincey being in his sixty-first. This fact of his mother's extreme longevity throws light on several matters in his biography. We note it here as explaining why it was that his confidences respecting his mother were not published till 1853 and 1856. He had reserved them till after her death.

(2) *De Quincey's Uncle.*—The uncle who figures so interestingly beside the mother at several points of the *Autobiographic Sketches* and the *Confessions* (but also only in the expansion of the *Sketches* in 1853 and the enlarged edition of the *Confessions* in 1856) was Thomas Penson, one of two brothers who had gone out to Bengal in the East India Company's service, when very young men, in or about 1780. The other brother, Edward Penson, having died early in his Indian career, it was this Thomas that continued to represent the Penson side of the De Quincey family. His fortunes in India seem to have been very prosperous ; for, when he was home from India, as Captain Penson, on that memorable furlough of 1802-3 when he resided with his sister at the Priory, Chester, he had with him, De Quincey tells us, a retinue of Bengalee servants, a stud of Arab horses, &c. Returning to India, he must have remained there a good many years, rising to the rank of colonel, and still in prosperous fortunes ; for, as late as 1819, when De Quincey's circumstances in his married life at the Lakes were at their lowest ebb, and he was editing the *Westmoreland Gazette*, and casting about in various directions for the means of a livelihood by literature, one finds, from documents published in Mr. Page's Biography of De Quincey, that it was to his uncle Colonel Penson in India that De

Quincey chiefly looked for extrication from his immediate pecuniary difficulties. The correspondence between them, at this and at other dates, leaves no room to doubt that Colonel Penson was a very generous uncle indeed, and responded most kindly and promptly to such calls from his nephew. And he lived long enough to know that this nephew, the troublesome boy of former days, had come to be recognised by the world as a man of rare genius and a great English writer, of whom any uncle might be proud. How long he remained in India the information at hand does not enable us to say; but he did return, and spent his last days in his native land. He died on the 27th of June 1835, and was buried, it is believed, in Cheltenham. De Quincey had been then for some years an inhabitant of Edinburgh.

So much by way of supplementary information respecting two of the senior personages in De Quincey's autobiographic papers. What follows is supplementary to the notices that occur there of De Quincey's wife and children.

De Quincey's marriage with Margaret Simpson, the daughter of a substantial Westmoreland yeoman, his near neighbour at Grasmere, occurred some time late in 1816, when he was in his thirty-first year, and the bride in her eighteenth or nineteenth. One of the most beautiful passages in the *Confessions* is that in which she is described as the fair young wife seated at the tea-table in the little cottage at Grasmere in the first years of their married life. Then there are glimpses of her, touchingly pathetic, in that later year or two, also described by De Quincey, when his thraldom to opium was at its worst, incapacitating him for work of any kind, and converting the poor young wife and mother into the nurse, day and night, of her drug-benumbed and spectre-haunted husband. Gradually there came recovery from this extreme prostration, with the exertions required by the shattered state of the household finances, first in the temporary editorship of the *Westmoreland Gazette*, and then in that visit to London in 1821, in quest of more promising literary employment, the great event of which was the publication of the *Opium-Eating Confessions* in their magazine form. When De Quincey returned to Grasmere in

December 1821, it was partly, he tells us, that he might be able, with the aid of such "fuller memoranda" as he had there, and of the recollections of her who had been his "only companion" through the years of his worst suffering, to write the continuation of his *Confessions* which he had publicly promised. The promise, as we know, was not fulfilled; and, when the *Confessions* appeared in book-form in the little volume of 1822, the sole addition to the reprinted magazine articles was a somewhat scraggy "Appendix." But, after another year of invalid and idle life at Grasmere, De Quincey again roused himself; and between 1822 and 1825 we find him in the very busiest years of his contributorship to the *London Magazine*,—sometimes sending his papers from Grasmere, but more than once back in London for several months together, writing in lodgings, and trying whether London might not be the best permanent residence for himself and his family. Baffled in that experiment after all his exertions, he is again at Grasmere in 1825, and in a state of the utmost despondency, when light begins to break upon him from a quarter to which he had looked wistfully already, but hitherto in vain. There were beckonings to him from Edinburgh by his friend Christopher North, now lord of *Blackwood's Magazine*, and able to convince the proprietors of that periodical, if they required to be convinced, that regular contributions from such a celebrity as "The English Opium-Eater" would be well worth their while. From 1826 onwards, accordingly, it is *Blackwood* that succeeds the *London Magazine* as De Quincey's sheet-anchor, and Edinburgh that succeeds London as his place of hope. Consequently, through the four years between 1826 and 1830, while the cottage at Grasmere was still kept up, and De Quincey's wife and children continued to reside there, his own visits to Edinburgh, and residences there, were increasingly frequent. Perhaps the most interesting memorial extant of this period of his comings and goings between Edinburgh and his home at the Lakes is in a preserved letter of Carlyle's to him from Craigenputtock, of date 11th December 1828. Carlyle and his wife had become well acquainted with De Quincey personally during their recent short residence in Edinburgh after their marriage; and Carlyle now sends a cordial invitation to

him to visit them in their Dumfriesshire solitude. It is but a short way, he tells De Quincey, out of his direct route between Edinburgh and Westmoreland; he will meet with the "warmest welcome"; and, though the scenery around Craigenputtock, consisting chiefly of bogs, may be drearier than that of the English Lakes, it is not without attractions and capabilities! If there were a sufficiency of fit residents in it, for instance, why should it not produce and support a literary school of its own, that should rival that of the Lakists? "But the misery is the almost total want of "colonists! Would *you* come hither and be King over us, "*then* indeed we had made a fair beginning, and the 'Bog "School' might snap its fingers at the 'Lake School' itself!" After more "fooling" of this kind, as Carlyle calls it, he adds seriously, "I have a thousand things to ask concerning you: "your employments, purposes, sufferings, and pleasures. "Will you not write to me? Will you not come to me and "tell? Believe it, you are well loved here, and none feels "better than I what a spirit is eclipsed in clouds." The reference in these last words is, in part at least, to the still hampered condition of De Quincey's finances. His Edinburgh earnings, one finds from other records, were still insufficient, as his London earnings had previously been, for the concurrent expenses of his household at Grasmere and of himself when away from it. It was the good Dorothy Wordsworth, we learn from these records, that suggested at last the proper remedy. By her advice, Mrs. De Quincey and the children, some time in 1830, when it had become clear that Edinburgh, and Edinburgh alone, was to be the scene of De Quincey's future literary industry, left their native vale of Grasmere and joined him in the northern city. He was then forty-five years of age, and his wife about two and thirty. One would like to be able to imagine distinctly the life of the English dalesman's daughter as it was spent among strangers through those subsequent years of De Quincey's still chequered fortunes, with changes of domicile from the town to the suburbs, and from the suburbs back to the town, which were the closing stage of her companionship with the singular man of genius to whom fate had wedded her. But the materials are deficient. "Delicate

"health and family cares," says one of her daughters, "made "her early withdraw from society; but she seems to have "had a powerful fascination for the few friends she admitted "to her intimacy." Further than these words imply we must be content to guess, save that among her troubles, after her coming to Edinburgh, there are registered the deaths of two of her children: first, her youngest boy, Julius, in 1833, in his fifth year; and next, in 1835, her eldest and first-born, William, in his eighteenth year, his father's pride and the glory of the household. Two years after this second blow, on the 7th of August 1837, she herself died. She was buried in the grave in St. Cuthbert's churchyard in which De Quincey's own body now rests. Rather more than twenty-two years was to be the duration of his widowerhood.

Three sons and three daughters, alive at the time of their mother's death, the eldest then not more than nineteen years of age, remained in De Quincey's charge in Edinburgh, or rather to take joint charge of De Quincey and of themselves as well as they could. For the first two or three years of his widowerhood the habitation of the family was still in Edinburgh; but in 1840, as we already know, began the tenancy of that pleasant cottage at Lasswade, seven miles out of the town, which was to be the more convenient home thenceforward for the young people when their father's literary labours did not permit him to be with them, and for himself too whenever he could be in their company. Hardly, however, had the little household at Lasswade been formed, when the eldest of the sons, Horace, went out to China as an officer in the 26th Cameronians. There, after having served through a campaign under Sir Hugh Gough, he died of a malarious fever in 1842, before he had completed his twentieth year. Of the two remaining sons, the next in age, Francis, after having been for some time clerk in a commercial house in Manchester, returned to Lasswade in 1845, and, having qualified himself for the medical profession by attendance on the medical classes in the University of Edinburgh and by some subsequent experience in an Edinburgh medical appointment, emigrated in 1851 for the practice of his profession in Brazil. By that time the youngest son, Paul Frederick, was also abroad, for a more adventurous career in India. Having

received a commission in the 80th Queen's Regiment, he was present at the battle of Sobraon, the last battle of the Sikh war, on the 10th of February 1846 ; and he remained in India, seeing further service there, and winning distinction and promotion, for the next eleven years. Meanwhile, the three daughters remaining together in the Lasswade home, and De Quincey having domesticated himself with them completely at last, in the character of their sole protector and the natural head of the household after the sons had gone, there had arrived for him that happiest and most tranquil period of his declining life in which one likes now to remember him. We see him from 1849 to 1854, or from his sixty-fourth year to his sixty-ninth, living habitually in his Lasswade home, all his pecuniary anxieties now at an end, and with no other troubles left than those of feeble health and the effects of opium,—his days passing pleasantly amid his books and papers, or in solitary rambles in a circuit of well-known lanes and country roads in the vicinity, or sometimes in the longer trudge into Edinburgh of which he was still fond and for which he would make occasion, but invariably in the evenings in the society of his daughters, or of neighbours who dropped in, or of admiring visitors from a distance who had come to dine with him or take tea with him by express invitation. Of the several incidents by which, in succession, this quiet routine of the domestic life at Lasswade was interrupted, the first, as the reader of our General Preface in Vol. I. may recollect, was the marriage of De Quincey's eldest daughter, Margaret. By her marriage in 1853 to Mr. Robert Craig, the son of a highly respected Lasswade neighbour, followed as it was by the removal of the married pair to Ireland for a farming enterprise of the husband's, the two younger sisters, who had till then shared with her in the domestic management, were left in entire charge. In that same year, however, as the reader may be reminded, there had been begun the publication of the Collective Edinburgh Edition of De Quincey's writings, the labours over which were found by him increasingly incompatible with the seven miles of distance between Lasswade and the Edinburgh printing-office. Hence, in 1854, his requartering of himself, for the purposes of his continued editorial labour, in those

lodgings in No. 42 Lothian Street which he had tenanted for a while long before, but which, from the date of this re-entry into them, were to hold divided possession of him with the Lasswade country-home for the rest of his life. In the following year, 1855, matters were further complicated by the departure of his second daughter, Florence, for her marriage in India with Major Baird Smith, the already distinguished officer of the Bengal Engineers, afterwards known as Colonel Baird Smith, to whom she had been for some time engaged. As it was hardly possible then that the remaining and youngest daughter, Emily, should be left alone in the Lasswade cottage, and as De Quincey felt or fancied himself chained to his workshop in Lothian Street, the arrangements had to correspond. Accordingly, what we see for the next year or two is the dreamy old scholar buried in that workshop amid a litter of books, proofs, and manuscripts, and toiling at the production of volume after volume of his collective edition, but with his thoughts at every moment of leisure wandering with fatherly fondness towards his dispersed children. He kept up a loving correspondence with his daughter Mrs. Craig in her Irish home, and with his daughter Emily at such times as she chanced to be there with her sister; but his affections were turned also largely towards the son and daughter and son-in-law who were in India. Especially after the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in January 1857 were his thoughts turned in *their* direction, his anxiety for news from them then rising to a high pitch of excitement. In the July of that year he had the satisfaction of again setting his eyes on one of them,—his son, Paul Frederick, having then come home on leave, after having served through the first actions against the Mutiny, and been promoted to captain's rank; and it was during this visit that there occurred that journey of De Quincey to Ireland, in the convoy of the captain and of Miss De Quincey, to see his eldest daughter and her children in their Irish abode, which was so unusual a feat of locomotion for him in his old age. Not till December 1858, however, when De Quincey had but one year more to live, was the Indian Mutiny totally suppressed; and in the last year of his life what was freshest in his mind was the recollection of the horrors of

this dreadful business, mingled with pride in the nobly conspicuous part that had been performed by his son-in-law, Colonel Baird Smith, both in the military and in the civil exertions required for the great re-conquest. When De Quincey died, in Lothian Street, Edinburgh, on the 8th of December 1859, it was in the presence of Mrs. Craig, who had come over from Ireland on summons, and of Miss De Quincey, who had for some time been in close attendance upon him. Captain De Quincey was then back in India; and Mrs. Baird Smith, after four years of life in India, was on her way home.

Not long after the death of De Quincey himself, there was a further thinning of the family by the death in Brazil of the medical son, Francis (the third of the sons originally), and the death in India of the greatly regretted Colonel Baird Smith. Both deaths occurred in 1861. Ten years later, in 1871, Mrs. Craig, the eldest of De Quincey's daughters, died in Ireland. Since then the only surviving children of De Quincey have been the above-mentioned Indian soldier, Paul Frederick (the fifth of the family originally), and his two remaining and younger sisters, Mrs. Baird Smith and Miss De Quincey. The first of these, having ceased his Indian soldiering a good many years ago, when he had attained the rank of brigade-major, became a settler in New Zealand by purchasing lands there; and he has remained there ever since, married but with no family, engaged chiefly in farming occupations, though now and then rendering services to the colony on occasions calling his military experience into requisition,—*e.g.* in the organisation of the New Zealand Militia about the time of the last Maori war. His present post is that of Sergeant-at-Arms to the New Zealand Parliament. Mrs. Baird Smith and her children reside in London, and Miss De Quincey with them.

The sole remaining son being at such a distance, it is on Mrs. Baird Smith and Miss De Quincey that the guardianship of their father's memory in this country, in literary respects as well as in others, has mainly devolved. They have been true to the duty. It was they that furnished much of the material, in the shape of preserved family letters and other documents, that enriched Mr. Page's full and excel-

lent Biography of De Quincey, in two volumes, published in 1877 ; and their own contributions to those volumes are among the most interesting portions of their contents. No reader of the volumes can forget the tender pages in them which contain Mrs. Baird Smith's recollections of her father in the early days of her own childhood, when she and his other children were left orphans with him in Edinburgh after their mother's death, or the charming picture she gives of him and his domestic ways in the later and happier days of his established residence at Lasswade; and Miss De Quincey's account of her father's last illness and death has all the fidelity and exactness of a record of daughterly affection from the closing scene itself. Both Mrs. Baird Smith and Miss De Quincey, we may now add, have extended their interest in their father's memory to the present collective edition of his writings. It is by their kind help that some facts and dates that would not otherwise have been ascertainable have been recovered for this biographic summary ; and it is to Mrs. Baird Smith in particular that we are indebted for the use in these volumes of some of the valuable family portraits in her possession. Already, by her leave, we have been able to present the reader with reproductions of several of these,—viz. the chalk-drawing group of De Quincey, *ætat.* 70, with two of his daughters (Mrs. Craig and Miss De Quincey), which forms the frontispiece to Vol. I., and the miniatures of De Quincey's father, mother, and uncle, which form the frontispiece to Vol. III., with the striking head of De Quincey himself, *ætat.* 17, which appears as a vignette in that volume. To these we have the pleasure of adding in the present volume two more illustrations from the same collection. The vignette miniature of De Quincey's brother Richard, the famous "Brother Pink" of the *Autobiography*, is published by Mrs. Baird Smith's leave ; the portrait of Mrs. Baird Smith herself appears by the express permission of her daughters, the Misses Baird Smith, who are the possessors of the original picture.

All the more because of these various favours are we bound to insert here, at the request of Mrs. Baird Smith and Miss De Quincey, a communication intended to obviate what they think might be a possible misconstruction of

certain sentences in the account given in Vol. I. (pp. xvi-xix) of De Quincey's domestic circumstances in the last years of his life.——The communication is as follows:—"Mr. "de Quincey's daughters would desire to state that the "home at Lasswade was never either partially or wholly "broken up till after their father's death; that it was not "till long after Mrs. Baird Smith left for India that he was "forced, by pressure of work for his collected edition, to be "*more* in Edinburgh than at home; that he was never "without a daughter, or daughters, at home, or ready to "return home at a moment's notice had they by chance "taken the opportunity of his necessary absence for visits to "friends or relatives; and that the home was always left in "charge of a trusted old servant, living close at hand, to "prepare for an immediate return in the event of a sudden "summons by Mr. de Q. In proof of this statement that "the home was not broken up till after Mr. de Quincey's "death, it may be mentioned that it was arranged that Mrs. "Baird Smith, on her return from India with her children "in the winter of 1859-60, should join her father and sister "in the home at Lasswade,—an arrangement which only his "death before her return put a stop to. Finally, it must be "noted that, at the first friendly hint from Mr. Findlay that "Mr. de Q. was not seemingly in his usual health, Miss de "Quincey hastened to him and was his companion and "nurse during his last long illness,—her absence at that time "being the result of constraining family opinion, shared in "by Mr. de Quincey himself (but wholly repugnant to his "daughter's feeling), that she ought not to be left alone in a "solitary house during the long dark winter nights. It may "naturally be asked why she could not join her father in "Edinburgh. It is sufficient to say that, when Mr. de "Quincey found it necessary to separate himself from his "family, it was *for the sake of his work*, for the successful "prosecution of which he had to secure himself from social "interruptions; and, as his daughters had many and most "kind friends in Edinburgh, his plight in respect to social "demands would have been worse than at home had she "joined him. Besides, Mrs. Wilson's accommodation for "another member of the family was so insufficient that it

"would have been a serious inconvenience, even at the
"time of his last illness, had Miss de Q.'s thoughts
"not been too deeply occupied in her sad and anxious
"work to give any attention to it.—Mr. de Quincey's
"daughters, all together, and each in turn, claim to have
"fulfilled their duty to their father with that devotion
"which his eminently lovable character inspired,—a duty
"which became more and more easy and delightful to fulfil
"as more and more during his latter years he escaped from
"the disorganising bondage of opium."

Of the nine papers of De Quincey included in the present volume, four,—viz. those on Shakespeare, Pope, Goethe, and Schiller,—were contributions to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, begun in 1827 under the editorship of Mr. Macvey Napier, and completed in 1842. These were reprinted in 1863 by the present proprietors of De Quincey's Works (who are also the owners of the *Encyclopædia*) in one of their two supplementary volumes to De Quincey's own fourteen-volume edition of his collected writings. Reprinted thus posthumously, they appeared there, and are now reproduced, without any revision by the author. The other five papers of the volume did have this benefit, having been reprinted by De Quincey himself in his Collective Edition. Two of these,—viz. the elaborate and extremely important biography of Richard Bentley, and the highly interesting and amusing compilation of anecdotes respecting Kant in his last days,—are of the dates 1830 and 1827 respectively, and were among De Quincey's earliest contributions to *Blackwood's Magazine*. Of the remaining three papers, one,—that on Herder,—is a reprint of an article of 1823 in one of the numbers of De Quincey's first fathering periodical, the *London Magazine*; another,—the biographic sketch of Milton,—was recovered by De Quincey from the pages of a forgotten London miscellany of 1838, and was adapted for republication by some footnotes and by the addition of a long and characteristic Postscript; and the third,—the biographic sketch of Goldsmith,—had appeared originally in the *North British Review*. This last-named periodical, an Edinburgh quarterly of high character, had been established in 1844, under the auspices of

Dr. Chalmers and the other chiefs of the Free Church of Scotland, with the Rev. Dr. David Welsh for its first editor; and, as it aimed at conjoining the utmost freedom and variety in the literary department with the advocacy of its special set of ecclesiastical principles, it was not likely to neglect the chance of securing an occasional contribution from an Edinburgh resident of such supreme literary distinction as De Quincey. Though I had heard it reported, however, that De Quincey *had* been a contributor to the *North British Review*, my inquiries on the subject some time ago had left me in doubt; and it has been only in the course of editing the present volume that I have ascertained the exact particulars. In the year 1848, when the *Review* was under the editorship of Dr. Chalmers's son-in-law, the late Rev. Dr. William Hanna, De Quincey, I find, did furnish it with three articles. The first of these, published in the number for May 1848, was that paper on Oliver Goldsmith which is the only paper in the present volume not already accounted for. It was with some natural interest that, on looking at an old copy of the number containing this first contribution of De Quincey to the *North British Review*, I found that the very next article to it in that number was my own first contribution to the same periodical. DAVID MASSON.

SHAKSPEARE [1]

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,[2] the protagonist on the great arena of modern poetry, and the glory of the human intellect, was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, in the year 1564, and upon some day, not precisely ascertained, in the month of April. It is certain that he was baptized on the 25th; and from that fact, combined with some shadow of a tradition, Malone has inferred that he was born

[1] Contributed in 1838 to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and republished in 1863 in Vol. XV of Messrs. A. & C. Black's Sixteen Volume Edition of De Quincey's Works, with a prefatory note containing this quotation from a letter of De Quincey's, of date July 16, 1838 :—"No paper ever cost me so much labour: parts "of it have been recomposed three times over. And thus far I an-"ticipate your approval of this article, that no one question has been "neglected which I ever heard of in connexion with Shakespeare's "name; and I fear no rigour of examination, notwithstanding I have "had no books to assist me but the two volumes lent me by yourself "(viz. 1st vol. of Alex. Chalmers's edit. 1826, and the late popular "edit. in one vol. by Mr. Campbell). The Sonnets I have been "obliged to quote by memory, and for many of my dates or other "materials to depend solely on my memory." In a subsequent letter, the same prefatory note informs us, he repeated the statement thus :—"The Shakspeare article cost me more intense labour than any I ever "wrote in my life. The final part has cost me a vast deal of labour "in condensing; and I believe, if you examine it, you will not com-"plain of want of novelty, which luckily was in this case quite "reconcilable with truth,—so deep is the mass of error which has "gathered about Shakspeare."—M.

[2] See, at the end of this paper, De Quincey's appended note on the spelling of the name.—M.

on the 23d. There is doubtless, on the one hand, no absolute necessity deducible from law or custom, as either operated in those times, which obliges us to adopt such a conclusion ; for children might be baptized, and were baptized, at various distances from their birth : yet, on the other hand, the 23d is as likely to have been the day as any other ; and more likely than any earlier day, upon two arguments. First, because there was probably a tradition floating in the seventeenth century that Shakspeare died upon his birthday : now it is beyond a doubt that he died upon the 23d of April. Secondly, because it is a reasonable presumption that no parents, living in a simple community, tenderly alive to the pieties of household duty, and in an age still clinging reverentially to the ceremonial ordinances of religion, would much delay the adoption of their child into the great family of Christ. Considering the extreme frailty of an infant's life during its two earliest years, to delay would often be to disinherit the child of its Christian privileges: privileges not the less eloquent to the feelings from being profoundly mysterious, and, in the English Church, forced not only upon the attention, but even upon the eye, of the most thoughtless. According to the discipline of the English Church, the unbaptized are buried with "maimed rites," shorn of their obsequies, and sternly denied that "sweet and solemn farewell" by which otherwise the Church expresses her final charity with all men ; and not only so, but they are even *locally* separated and sequestrated. Ground the most hallowed, and populous with Christian burials of households

> "That died in peace with one another,
> Father, sister, son, and brother,"

opens to receive the vilest malefactor ; by which the Church symbolically expresses her maternal willingness to gather back into her fold those even of her flock who have strayed from her by the most memorable aberrations ; and yet, with all this indulgence, she banishes to unhallowed ground the innocent bodies of the unbaptized. To them and to suicides she turns a face of wrath. With this gloomy fact offered to the very external senses, it is difficult to suppose that any parents would risk their own reproaches by putting the

fulfilment of so grave a duty on the hazard of a convulsion fit. The case of royal children is different; their baptisms, it is true, were often delayed for weeks; but the household chaplains of the palace were always at hand, night and day, to baptize them in the very agonies of death.[1] We must presume, therefore, that William Shakspeare was born on some day very little anterior to that of his baptism; and the more so because the season of the year was lovely and genial, the 23d of April in 1564 corresponding in fact with what we now call the 3d of May, so that, whether the child was to be carried abroad, or the clergyman to be summoned, no hindrance would arise from the weather. One only argument has sometimes struck us for supposing that the 22d might be the day, and not the 23d; which is, that Shakspeare's sole grand-daughter, Lady Barnard, was married on the 22d of April 1626, ten years exactly from the poet's death; and the reason for choosing this day *might* have had a reference to her illustrious grandfather's birthday; which, there is good reason for thinking, would be celebrated as a festival in the family for generations. Still this choice *may* have been an accident, or governed merely by reason of convenience. And, on the whole, it is as well perhaps to acquiesce in the old belief that Shakspeare was born and died on the 23d of April. We cannot do wrong if we drink to his memory on both 22d and 23d.

On a first review of the circumstances, we have reason to feel no little perplexity in finding the materials for a life of this transcendent writer so meagre and so few, and amongst

[1] But, as a proof that, even in the case of royal christenings, it was not thought pious to "tempt God," as it were, by delay:—Edward VI, the only son of Henry VIII, was born on the 12th day of October in the year 1537; and there was a delay on account of the sponsors, since the birth was not in London. Yet how little that delay was made may be seen by this fact: The birth took place in the dead of the night; the day was Friday; and yet, in spite of all delay, the christening was most pompously celebrated on the succeeding Monday. And Prince Arthur, the elder brother of Henry VIII, was christened on the very next Sunday succeeding to his birth, notwithstanding an inevitable delay occasioned by the distance of Lord Oxford, his godfather, and the excessive rains, which prevented the earl being reached by couriers, or himself reaching Winchester, without extraordinary exertions.

them the larger part of doubtful authority. All the energy of curiosity directed upon this subject through a period of one hundred and fifty years (for so long it is since Betterton the actor began to make researches) has availed us little or nothing. Neither the local traditions of his provincial birth-place, though sharing with London through half a century the honour of his familiar presence, nor the recollections of that brilliant literary circle with whom he lived in the metropolis, have yielded much more than such an outline of his history as is oftentimes to be gathered from the penurious records of a grave-stone. That he lived, and that he died, and that he was "a little lower than the angels";—these make up pretty nearly the amount of our undisputed report. It may be doubted indeed whether at this day we are as accurately acquainted with the life of Shakspeare as with that of Chaucer, though divided from each other by an interval of two centuries, and (what should have been more effectual towards oblivion) by the wars of the two Roses. And yet the traditional memory of a rural and a sylvan region, such as Warwickshire at that time was, is usually exact as well as tenacious; and, with respect to Shakspeare in particular, we may presume it to have been full and circumstantial through the generation succeeding to his own, not only from the curiosity, and perhaps something of a scandalous interest, which would pursue the motions of one living so large a part of his life at a distance from his wife, but also from the final reverence and honour which would settle upon the memory of a poet so pre-eminently successful,—of one who, in a space of five-and-twenty years, after running a bright career in the capital city of his native land, and challenging notice from the throne, had retired with an ample fortune, created by his personal efforts, and by labours purely intellectual.

How are we to account, then, for that deluge, as if from Lethe, which has swept away so entirely the traditional memorials of one so illustrious? Such is the fatality of error which overclouds every question connected with Shakspeare that two of his principal critics, Steevens and Malone, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by cutting it with a falsehood. They deny in effect that he *was* illus-

trious in the century succeeding to his own, however much he has since become so. We shall first produce their statements in their own words, and we shall then briefly review them.

Steevens delivers *his* opinion in the following terms:—"How little Shakspeare was once read may be understood from Tate, who, in his dedication to the altered play of King Lear, speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the Tatler, having occasion to quote a few lines out of Macbeth, was content to receive them from Davenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted." Another critic, who cites this passage from Steevens, pursues the hypothesis as follows:—"In fifty years after his death, Dryden mentions that he was then become *a little obsolete.* In the beginning of the last century, Lord Shaftesbury complains of his *rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit.* It is certain that, for nearly a hundred years after his death, partly owing to the immediate revolution and rebellion, and partly to the licentious taste encouraged in Charles II's time, and perhaps partly to the incorrect state of his works, he was ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGLECTED." This critic then goes on to quote with approbation the opinion of Malone,—"that, if he had been read, admired, studied, and imitated, in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some inquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life." After which this enlightened writer reaffirms and clenches the judgment he has quoted by saying,—"His admirers, however, *if he had admirers in that age,* possessed no portion of such enthusiasm."

It may perhaps be an instructive lesson to young readers if we now show them, by a short sifting of these confident dogmatists, how easy it is for a careless or a half-read man to circulate the most absolute falsehoods under the semblance of truth,—falsehoods which impose upon himself as much as they do upon others. We believe that not one word or illustration is uttered in the sentences cited from

these three critics which is not *virtually* in the very teeth of the truth.

To begin with Mr. Nahum Tate[1]:—This poor grub of literature, if he did really speak of Lear as "an *obscure* piece, recommended to his notice by a friend," of which we must be allowed to doubt, was then uttering a conscious falsehood. It happens that Lear was one of the few Shakspearian dramas which had kept the stage unaltered. But it is easy to see a mercenary motive in such an artifice as this. Mr. Nahum Tate is not of a class of whom it can be safe to say that they are "well known": they and their desperate tricks are essentially obscure, and good reason he has to exult in the felicity of such obscurity; for else this same vilest of travesties, Mr. Nahum's Lear, would consecrate his name to everlasting scorn. For himself, he belonged to the age of Dryden rather than of Pope; he "flourished," if we can use such a phrase of one who was always withering, about the era of the Revolution; and his Lear, we believe, was arranged in the year 1682. But the family to which he belongs is abundantly recorded in the Dunciad; and his own name will be found amongst its catalogues of heroes.

With respect to *the author of the "Tatler,"* a very different explanation is requisite. Steevens means the reader to understand Addison; but it does not follow that the particular paper in question was from his pen.[2] Nothing, however, could be more natural than to quote from the common form of the play as then in possession of the stage. It was *there*, beyond a doubt, that a fine gentleman living upon town, and not professing any deep scholastic knowledge of literature (a light in which we are always to regard the writers of the Spectator, Guardian, &c.), would be likely to have learned anything he quoted from Macbeth. This we say generally of the writers in those periodical papers; but, with reference to Addison in particular, it is time to correct the popular notion of his literary character, or at least to mark it by severer lines of distinction. It is already pretty well known

[1] Nahum Tate, 1652-1715.—M.

[2] The paper seems to be either No. 41 or No. 111 of the *Tatler*. The former is Steele's, and the later is assigned in Chalmers's Edition of the British Essayists conjointly to Steele and Addison.—M.

that Addison had no very intimate acquaintance with the literature of his own country. It is known also that he did not think such an acquaintance any ways essential to the character of an elegant scholar and *littérateur*. Quite enough he found it, and more than enough for the time he had to spare, if he could maintain a tolerable familiarity with the foremost Latin poets, and a very slender one indeed with the Grecian. *How* slender, we can see in his "Travels." Of modern authors, none as yet had been published with notes, commentaries, or critical collations of the text; and, accordingly, Addison looked upon all of them, except those few who professed themselves followers in the retinue and equipage of the ancients, as creatures of a lower race. Boileau, as a mere imitator and propagator of Horace, he read, and probably little else, amongst the French classics. Hence it arose that he took upon himself to speak sneeringly of Tasso. To this, which was a bold act for his timid mind, he was emboldened by the countenance of Boileau. Of the elder Italian authors, such as Ariosto, and, *a fortiori*, Dante, he knew absolutely nothing. Passing to our own literature, it is certain that Addison was profoundly ignorant of Chaucer and of Spenser. Milton only,—and why? simply because he was a brilliant scholar, and stands like a bridge between the Christian literature and the Pagan,—Addison had read and esteemed. There was also in the very constitution of Milton's mind, in the majestic regularity and planetary solemnity of its *epic* movements, something which he could understand and appreciate: as to the meteoric and incalculable eccentricities of the *dramatic* mind, as it displayed itself in the heroic age of our Drama amongst the Titans of 1590-1630, they confounded and overwhelmed him.

In particular, with regard to Shakspeare, we shall now proclaim a discovery which we made some twenty years ago. We, like others, from seeing frequent references to Shakspeare in the "Spectator," had acquiesced in the common belief that, although Addison was no doubt profoundly unlearned in Shakspeare's language, and thoroughly unable to do him justice (and this we might well assume, since his great rival Pope, who had expressly studied Shakspeare,

was, after all, so memorably deficient in the appropriate knowledge),—yet, that of course he had a vague popular knowledge of the mighty poet's cardinal dramas. Accident only led us into a discovery of our mistake. Twice or thrice we had observed that, if Shakspeare were quoted, that paper turned out not to be Addison's; and at length, by express examination, we ascertained the curious fact that Addison has never in one instance quoted or made any reference to Shakspeare.[1] But was this, as Steevens most disingenuously pretends, to be taken as an exponent of the public feeling towards Shakspeare? Was Addison's neglect representative of a general neglect? If so, whence came Rowe's edition, Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Bishop Warburton's, all upon the heels of one another? With such facts staring him in the face, how shameless must be that critic who could, in support of such a thesis, refer to "*the author of the 'Tatler,'*" contemporary with all these editors. The truth is, Addison was well aware of Shakspeare's hold on the popular mind; too well aware of it. The feeble constitution of the poetic faculty, as existing in himself, forbade his sympathising with Shakspeare; the proportions were too colossal for his delicate vision; and yet, as one who sought popularity himself, he durst not shock what perhaps he viewed as a national prejudice. Those who have happened, like ourselves, to see the effect of passionate music and "deep-inwoven harmonics" upon the feeling of an idiot,[2] may conceive what we mean. Such music does

[1] Seems decidedly wrong. In No. 160 of the *Spectator*, Addison, speaking of natural geniuses as distinct from geniuses of the exact and artificial order, says, "Our countryman Shakspeare was a remarkable instance of this first kind of geniuses"; and in *Spectator* No. 419, where Addison is treating of imaginations of the supernatural and ghastly, he says, "Among the English Shakspeare has incomparably excelled all others. That noble extravagance of fancy which he had in so great perfection thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious part of his reader's imagination, and made him capable of succeeding where he had nothing to support him besides the strength of his own genius."—M.

[2] A great modern poet refers to this very case of music entering "the mouldy chambers of the dull idiot's brain"; but in support of what seems to us a baseless hypothesis. [The poem cited is Wordsworth's "On the Power of Sound"; where, however, the quoted line has the word "vaults" instead of "chambers."—M.]

not utterly revolt the idiot; on the contrary, it has a strange but a horrid fascination for him: it alarms, irritates, disturbs, makes him profoundly unhappy; and chiefly by unlocking imperfect glimpses of thoughts and slumbering instincts which it is for his peace to have entirely obscured, because for him they can be revealed only partially, and with the sad effect of throwing a baleful gleam upon his blighted condition. Do we mean, then, to compare Addison with an idiot? Not generally, by any means. Nobody can more sincerely admire him where he was a man of real genius,—viz. in his delineations of character and manners, or in the exquisite delicacies of his humour. But assuredly Addison, as a poet, was amongst the sons of the feeble; and between the authors of Cato and of King Lear there was a gulf never to be bridged over.[1]

But Dryden, we are told, pronounced Shakspeare already in *his* day "*a little obsolete.*" Here, now, we have wilful, deliberate falsehood. *Obsolete*, in Dryden's meaning, does not imply that he was so with regard to his popularity (the question then at issue), but with regard to his diction and choice of words. To cite Dryden as a witness for any purpose against Shakspeare,—Dryden, who of all men had the most ransacked wit and exhausted language in celebrating the supremacy of Shakspeare's genius,—does indeed require as much shamelessness in feeling as mendacity in principle.

But then Lord Shaftesbury, who may be taken as halfway between Dryden and Pope (Dryden died in 1700, Pope was then twelve years old, and Lord S. wrote chiefly, we believe, between 1700 and 1710), "complains," it seems, "of his rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit." What if he does? Let the whole truth be told, and then we shall see how much stress is to be laid upon such a judgment. The second Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics," was the grandson of that famous

[1] Probably Addison's fear of the national feeling was a good deal strengthened by his awe of Milton and of Dryden, both of whom had expressed a homage towards Shakspeare which language cannot transcend. Amongst his political friends, also, were many intense admirers of Shakspeare.

political agitator, the Chancellor Shaftesbury, who passed his whole life in storms of his own creation. The second Lord Shaftesbury was a man of crazy constitution, querulous from ill health, and had received an eccentric education from his eccentric grandfather. He was practised daily in *talking* Latin, to which afterwards he added a competent study of the Greek; and, finally, he became unusually learned for his rank, but the most absolute and undistinguishing pedant that perhaps literature has to show. He sneers continually at the regular-built academic pedant; but he himself, though no academic, was essentially the very impersonation of pedantry. No thought however beautiful, no image however magnificent, could conciliate his praise as long as it was clothed in English; but present him with the most trivial commonplaces in Greek, and he unaffectedly fancied them divine; mistaking the pleasurable sense of his own power in a difficult and rare accomplishment for some peculiar force or beauty in the passage. Such was the outline of his literary taste. And was it upon Shakspeare only, or upon him chiefly, that he lavished his pedantry? Far from it. He attacked Milton with no less fervour; he attacked Dryden with a thousand times more. Jeremy Taylor he quoted only to ridicule; and even Locke, the confidential friend of his grandfather, he never alludes to without a sneer. As to Shakspeare, so far from Lord Shaftesbury's censures arguing his deficient reputation, the very fact of his noticing him at all proves his enormous popularity; for upon system he noticed those only who ruled the public taste. The insipidity of his objections to Shakspeare may be judged from this, that he comments in a spirit of absolute puerility upon the name *Desdemona*, as though intentionally formed from the Greek word for *superstition*. In fact, he had evidently read little beyond the list of names in Shakspeare; yet there is proof enough that the irresistible beauty of what little he *had* read was too much for all his pedantry, and startled him exceedingly; for ever afterwards he speaks of Shakspeare as one who, with a little aid from Grecian sources, really had something great and promising about him. As to modern authors, neither this Lord Shaftesbury nor Addison read anything for the latter years of their life but

Bayle's Dictionary. And most of the little scintillations of erudition which may be found in the notes to the "Characteristics," and in the Essays of Addison, are derived, almost without exception, and uniformly without acknowledgment, from Bayle.[1]

Finally, with regard to the sweeping assertion that "for nearly a hundred years after his death Shakspeare was almost entirely neglected," we shall meet this scandalous falsehood by a rapid view of his fortunes during the century in question. The tradition has always been that Shakspeare was honoured by the especial notice of Queen Elizabeth, as well as by that of James I. At one time we were disposed to question the truth of this tradition; but that was for want of having read attentively the lines of Ben Jonson to the memory of Shakspeare,—those generous lines which have so absurdly been taxed with faint praise. Jonson could make no mistake on this point: he, as one of Shakspeare's familiar companions, must have witnessed at the very time, and accompanied with friendly sympathy, every motion of royal favour towards Shakspeare. Now he, in words which leave no room for doubt, exclaims—

> "Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
> To see thee in our waters yet appear,
> And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
> *That so did take Eliza and our James.*"

These princes, then, *were* taken, were fascinated, with some of Shakspeare's dramas. In Elizabeth the approbation would probably be sincere. In James we can readily suppose it to have been assumed; for he was a pedant in a different sense from Lord Shaftesbury,—not from undervaluing modern poetry, but from caring little or nothing for any poetry, although he wrote about its mechanic rules. Still the royal *imprimatur* would be influential and serviceable no less when

[1] He who is weak enough to kick and spurn his own native literature, even if it were done with more knowledge than is shown by Lord Shaftesbury, will usually be kicked and spurned in his turn; and accordingly it has been often remarked that the "Characteristics" are unjustly neglected in our days. For Lord Shaftesbury, with all his pedantry, was a man of great talents. Leibnitz had the sagacity to see this through the mists of a translation.

offered hypocritically than in full sincerity. Next let us consider, at the very moment of Shakspeare's death, who were the leaders of the British youth, the *principes juventutis*, in the two fields, equally important to a great poet's fame, of rank and of genius? The Prince of Wales and John Milton; the first being then about sixteen years old, the other about eight. Now, these two great powers, as we may call them, these presiding stars over all that was English in thought and action, were both impassioned admirers of Shakspeare. Each of them counts for many thousands. The Prince of Wales[1] had learned to appreciate Shakspeare, not originally from reading him, but from witnessing the court representations of his plays at Whitehall. Afterwards we know that he made Shakspeare his closet companion, for he was reproached with doing so by Milton.[2] And we know also, from the just criticism pronounced upon the character and diction of Caliban by one of Charles's confidential counsellors, Lord Falkland, that the king's admiration of Shakspeare had impressed a determination upon the court reading. As to Milton, by double prejudices, puritanical and classical, his mind had been preoccupied against the full impressions of Shakspeare. And we know that there is such a thing as keeping the sympathies of love and admiration in a dormant state, or state of abeyance; an effort of self-conquest realized in more

[1] Perhaps the most bitter political enemy of Charles I. will have the candour to allow that, for a prince of those times, he was truly and eminently accomplished His knowledge of the arts was considerable; and, as a patron of art, he stands foremost amongst all British sovereigns to this hour. He said truly of himself, and wisely as to the principle, that he understood English law as well as a gentleman ought to understand it; meaning that an attorney's minute knowledge of forms and technical niceties was illiberal. Speaking of him as an author, we must remember that the *Eikon Basiliké* is still unappropriated; that question is still open But, supposing the king's claim negatived, still, in his controversy with Henderson, in his negotiations at the Isle of Wight and elsewhere, he discovered a power of argument, a learning, and a strength of memory, which are truly admirable, whilst the whole of his accomplishments are recommended by a modesty and a humility as rare as they are unaffected.

[2] The words (which occur in Milton's *Eikonoklastes* in reply to the supposed *Eikon Basiliké* of Charles I.) are these:—"One whom we well know was the closet companion of these his solitudes, William Shakespeare."—M.

cases than one by the ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, with regard to the profane classics. Intellectually they admired, and would not belie their admiration; but they did not give their hearts cordially, they did not abandon themselves to their natural impulses. They averted their eyes and weaned their attention from the dazzling object. Such, probably, was Milton's state of feeling towards Shakspeare after 1642, when the theatres were suppressed, and the fanatical fervour in its noontide heat. Yet even then he did not belie his reverence intellectually for Shakspeare; and in his younger days we know that he had spoken more enthusiastically of Shakspeare than he ever did again of any uninspired author. Not only did he address a sonnet to his memory,[1] in which he declares that kings would wish to die if by dying they could obtain such a monument in the hearts of men, but he also speaks of him in his *L'Allegro* as the tutelary genius of the English stage.[2] In this transmission of the torch (*λαμπαδοφορία*) Dryden succeeds to Milton. He was born nearly thirty years later; about thirty years they were contemporaries; and by thirty years, or nearly, Dryden survived his great leader. Dryden, in fact, lived out the seventeenth century. And we have now arrived within nine years of the era when the critical editions started in hot succession to one another. The names we have mentioned were the great influential names of the century. But of inferior homage there was no end. How came Betterton the actor, how came Davenant, how came Rowe, or Pope, by their intense (if not always sound) admiration for Shakspeare, unless they had found it fuming upwards, like incense to the Pagan deities in ancient times, from altars erected at every turning upon all the paths of men?

But it is objected that inferior dramatists were sometimes preferred to Shakspeare, and, again, that vile travesties of Shakspeare were preferred to the authentic dramas. As to

[1] Not a sonnet in the strict sense, but an outburst of sixteen lines of heroic rhyme, beginning "*What needs my Shakespeare?*"—M.

[2] "Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native woodnotes wild."—M.

the first argument, let it be remembered that, if the saints of the chapel are always in the same honour, because *there* men are simply discharging a duty which once due will be due for ever, the saints of the theatre, on the other hand, must bend to the local genius, and to the very reasons for having a theatre at all. Men go thither for amusement: this is the paramount purpose; and even acknowledged merit or absolute superiority must give way to it. Does a man at Paris expect to see Molière reproduced in proportion to his admitted precedency in the French drama? On the contrary, that very precedency argues such a familiarization with his works that those who are in quest of relaxation will reasonably prefer any recent drama to that which, having lost all its novelty, has lost much of its excitement. We speak of ordinary minds; but in cases of *public* entertainments, deriving part of their power from scenery and stage pomp, novelty is for all minds an essential condition of attraction. Moreover, in some departments of the comic, Beaumont and Fletcher, when writing in combination, really had a freedom and breadth of manner which excels the comedy of Shakspeare. As to the altered Shakspeare as taking precedency of the genuine Shakspeare, no argument can be so frivolous. The public were never allowed a choice: the great majority of an audience even now cannot be expected to carry the real Shakspeare in their mind, so as to pursue a comparison between that and the alteration. Their comparisons must be exclusively amongst what they have opportunities of seeing,—that is, between the various pieces presented to them by the managers of theatres. Further than this it is impossible for them to extend their office of judging and collating; and the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Davenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewellery of Shakspeare, cannot with any justice be charged upon the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing, but exclusively upon those (viz. theatrical managers) who had the very amplest. Yet even in excuse for *them* much may be said. The very length of some plays compelled them to make alterations. The best of Shakspeare's dramas, King Lear, is the least fitted for representation; and, even for the vilest alteration, it ought in

candour to be considered that possession is nine points of the law. He who would not have introduced was often obliged to retain.

Finally, it is urged that the small number of editions through which Shakspeare passed in the seventeenth century furnishes a separate argument, and a conclusive one, against his popularity. We answer that, considering the bulk of his plays collectively, the editions were *not* few: compared with any known case, the copies sold of Shakspeare were quite as many as could be expected under the circumstances. Ten or fifteen times as much consideration went to the purchase of one great folio like Shakspeare as would attend the purchase of a little volume like Waller or Donne. Without reviews, or newspapers, or advertisements to diffuse the knowledge of books, the progress of literature was necessarily slow, and its expansion narrow. But this is a topic which has always been treated unfairly, not with regard to Shakspeare only, but to Milton, as well as many others. The truth is, we have not facts enough to guide us; for the number of editions often tells nothing accurately as to the number of copies. With respect to Shakspeare it is certain that, had his masterpieces been gathered into small volumes, Shakspeare would have had a most extensive sale. As it was, there can be no doubt that from his own generation, throughout the seventeenth century, and until the eighteenth began to accommodate, not any greater popularity in *him*, but a greater taste for reading in the public, his fame never ceased to be viewed as a national trophy of honour; and the most illustrious men of the seventeenth century were no whit less fervent in their admiration than those of the eighteenth and the nineteenth, either as respected its strength and sincerity, or as respected its open profession.[1]

It is therefore a false notion that the general sympathy with the merits of Shakspeare ever beat with a languid or intermitting pulse. Undoubtedly, in times when the functions of critical journals and of newspapers were not at hand to diffuse or to strengthen the impressions which emanated from the capital, all opinions must have travelled slowly into the provinces. But even then, whilst the perfect organs of com-

[1] See De Quincey's appended note.—M.

munication were wanting, indirect substitutes were supplied by the necessities of the times, or by the instincts of political zeal. Two channels especially lay open between the great central organ of the national mind and the remotest provinces. Parliaments were occasionally summoned (for the judges' circuits were too brief to produce much effect); and during their longest suspensions the nobility, with large retinues, continually resorted to the court. But an intercourse more constant and more comprehensive was maintained through the agency of the two universities. Already, in the time of James I., the growing importance of the gentry, and the consequent birth of a new interest in political questions, had begun to express itself at Oxford, and still more so at Cambridge. Academic persons stationed themselves as sentinels at London, for the purpose of watching the court and the course of public affairs. These persons wrote letters, like those of the celebrated Joseph Mede, which we find in Ellis's Historical Collections, reporting to their fellow-collegians all the novelties of public life as they arose, or personally carried down such reports, and thus conducted the general feelings at the centre into lesser centres, from which again they were diffused into the ten thousand parishes of England; for (with a very few exceptions in favour of poor benefices, Welch or Cumbrian) every parish priest must unavoidably have spent his three years at one or other of the English universities. And by this mode of diffusion it is that we can explain the strength with which Shakspeare's thoughts and diction impressed themselves from a very early period upon the national literature, and even more generally upon the national thinking and conversation.[1]

[1] One of the profoundest tests by which we can measure the congeniality of an author with the national genius and temper is the degree in which his thoughts or his phrases interweave themselves with our daily conversation, and pass into the currency of the language. *Few French authors, if any, have imparted one phrase to the colloquial idiom;* with respect to Shakspeare, a large dictionary might be made of such phrases as "win golden opinions," "in my mind's eye," "patience on a monument," "o'erstep the modesty of nature," "more honoured in the breach than in the observance," "palmy state," "my poverty and not my will consents," and so forth without end. This reinforcement of the general language by aids from the mintage of Shakspeare had already commenced in the seventeenth century.

The question therefore revolves upon us in threefold difficulty. How, having stepped thus prematurely into this inheritance of fame, leaping, as it were, thus abruptly into the favour alike of princes and the enemies of princes, had it become possible that in his native place (honoured still more in the final testimonies of his preference when founding a family mansion) such a man's history, and the personal recollections which cling so affectionately to the great intellectual potentates who have recommended themselves by gracious manners, could so soon and so utterly have been obliterated ?

Malone, with childish irreflection, ascribes the loss of such memorials to the want of enthusiasm in his admirers. Local researches into private history had not then commenced. Such a taste, often petty enough in its management, was the growth of after-ages. Else how came Spenser's life and fortunes to be so utterly overwhelmed in oblivion ? No poet of a high order could be more popular.

The answer we believe to be this :—Twenty-six years after Shakspeare's death commenced the great Parliamentary War: this it was, and the local feuds arising to divide family from family, brother from brother, upon which we must charge the extinction of traditions and memorials doubtless abundant up to that era. The parliamentary contest, it will be said, did not last above three years; the King's standard having been first raised at Nottingham in August 1642, and the battle of Naseby (which terminated the open warfare) having been fought in June 1645. Or, even if we extend its duration to the surrender of the last garrison, that war terminated in the spring of 1646. And the brief explosions of insurrection or of Scottish invasion which occurred on subsequent occasions were all locally confined ; and none came near to Warwickshire, except the battle of Worcester, more than five years after. This is true ; but a short war will do much to efface recent and merely personal memorials. And the following circumstances of the war were even more important than the general fact.

First of all, the very mansion founded by Shakspeare became the military head-quarters for the Queen in 1644, when marching from the eastern coast of England to join the

King in Oxford[1]; and one such special visitation would be likely to do more serious mischief in the way of extinction than many years of general warfare. Secondly, as a fact, perhaps, equally important, Birmingham, the chief town of Warwickshire, and the adjacent district, the seat of our hardware manufactures, was the very focus of disaffection towards the royal cause. Not only, therefore, would this whole region suffer more from internal and spontaneous agitation, but it would be the more frequently traversed vindictively from without, and harassed by flying parties from Oxford, or others of the King's garrisons. Thirdly, even apart from the political aspects of Warwickshire, this county happens to be the central one of England, as regards the roads between the north and south; and Birmingham has long been the great central axis[2] in which all the radii from the four angles of England proper meet and intersect. Mere accident, therefore, of local position, much more when united with that avowed inveteracy of malignant feeling which was bitter enough to rouse a reaction of bitterness in the mind of Lord Clarendon, would go far to account for the wreck of many memorials relating to Shakspeare, as well as for the subversion of that quiet and security for humble life in which the traditional memory finds its best *nidus*. Thus we obtain one solution, and perhaps the main one, of the otherwise mysterious oblivion which had swept away all traces of the mighty poet, by the time when those quiet days revolved upon England in which again the solitary agent of learned research might roam in security from house to house, gleaning those personal remembrances which, even in the fury of civil strife, might long have lingered by the chimney corner. But the fierce furnace of war had probably, by its *local* ravages, scorched this field of natural tradition, and

[1] According to Halliwell Phillipps, the date of Queen Henrietta Maria's temporary residence in the New Place, Stratford-on-Avon, was July 1643 —M.

[2] In fact, by way of representing to himself the system or scheme of the English roads, the reader has only to imagine one great letter X, or a St Andrew's cross, laid down from north to south, and decussating at Birmingham. Even Coventry, which makes a slight variation for one or two roads, and so far disturbs this decussation by shifting it eastwards, is still in Warwickshire.

thinned the gleaner's inheritance by three parts out of four. This, we repeat, may be one part of the solution to this difficult problem.

And, if another is still demanded, possibly it may be found in the fact, hostile to the perfect consecration of Shakspeare's memory, that after all he was a player. Many a coarse-minded country gentleman, or village pastor, who would have held his town glorified by the distinction of having sent forth a great judge or an eminent bishop, might disdain to cherish the personal recollections which surrounded one whom custom regarded as little above a mountebank, and the illiberal law as a vagabond. The same degrading appreciation attached both to the actor in plays and to their author. The contemptuous appellation of "play-book" served as readily to degrade the mighty volume which contained Lear and Hamlet, as that of "play-actor" or "player-man" has always served with the illiberal or the fanatical to dishonour the persons of Roscius or of Garrick, of Talma or of Siddons. Nobody, indeed, was better aware of this than the noble-minded Shakspeare; and feelingly he has breathed forth in his Sonnets this conscious oppression under which he lay of public opinion unfavourable by a double title to his own pretensions; for, being both dramatic author and dramatic performer, he found himself heir to a twofold opprobrium, and at an era of English society when the weight of that opprobrium was heaviest. In reality, there was at this period a collision of forces acting in opposite directions upon the estimation of the stage and scenical art, and therefore of all the ministers in its equipage. Puritanism frowned upon these pursuits, as ruinous to public morals; on the other hand, loyalty could not but tolerate what was patronized by the sovereign; and it happened that Elizabeth, James, and Charles I., were all alike lovers and promoters of theatrical amusements, which were indeed more indispensable to the relief of court ceremony, and the monotony of aulic pomp, than in any other region of life. This royal support, and the consciousness that any brilliant success in these arts implied an unusual share of natural endowments, did something in mitigation of a scorn which must else have been intolerable to all generous natures.

But, whatever prejudice might thus operate against the perfect sanctity of Shakspeare's posthumous reputation, it is certain that the splendour of his worldly success must have done much to obliterate that effect; his admirable colloquial talents a good deal, and his gracious affability still more. The wonder therefore will still remain that Betterton, in less than a century from his death,[1] should have been able to glean so little. And for the solution of this wonder we must throw ourselves chiefly upon the explanations we have made as to the Parliamentary War, and the local ravages of its progress in the very district, the very town, and the very house.

If further arguments are still wanted to explain this mysterious abolition, we may refer the reader to the following succession of disastrous events, by which it should seem that a perfect malice of misfortune pursued the vestiges of the mighty poet's steps. In 1613, the Globe Theatre, with which he had been so long connected, was burned to the ground. Soon afterwards a great fire occurred in Stratford; and next (without counting upon the fire of London, just fifty years after his death, which, however, would consume many an important record from periods far more remote) the house of Ben Jonson, in which probably, as Mr. Campbell suggests, might be parts of his correspondence, was also burned.[2] Finally, there was an old tradition that Lady Barnard, the sole grand-daughter of Shakspeare, had carried off many of his papers from Stratford; and these papers have never since been traced.

In many of the elder Lives it has been asserted that John Shakspeare, the father of the poet, was a butcher, and in others that he was a woolstapler. It is now settled beyond dispute that he was a glover. This was his professed occupation in Stratford, though it is certain that, with this leading trade, from which he took his denomination, he combined some collateral pursuits; and it is possible enough that, as openings offered, he may have meddled with many.

[1] Thomas Betterton, actor, *b.* 1635, *d.* 1710.—M.

[2] In Ben Jonson's poem, "An Execration upon Vulcan," where he enumerates some of his principal manuscript losses by this fire, he makes no mention of anything of this kind.—M.

In that age, and in a provincial town, nothing like the exquisite subdivision of labour was attempted which we now see realized in the great cities of Christendom. And one trade is often found to play into another with so much reciprocal advantage that even in our own days we do not much wonder at an enterprising man, in country places, who combines several in his own person. Accordingly, John Shakspeare is known to have united with his town calling the rural and miscellaneous occupations of a farmer.

Meantime his avowed business stood upon a very different footing from the same trade as it is exercised in modern times. Gloves were in that age an article of dress more costly by much, and more elaborately decorated, than in our own. They were a customary present from some cities to the judges of assize, and to other official persons—a custom of ancient standing, and in some places, we believe, still subsisting; and in such cases it is reasonable to suppose that the gloves must originally have been more valuable than the trivial modern article of the same name. So also, perhaps, in their origin, of the gloves given at funerals. In reality, whenever the simplicity of an age makes it difficult to renew the parts of a wardrobe except in capital towns of difficult access, prudence suggests that such wares should be manufactured of more durable materials; and, being so, they become obviously susceptible of more lavish ornament. But it will not follow, from this essential difference in the gloves of Shakspeare's age, that the glover's occupation was more lucrative. Doubtless he sold more costly gloves, and upon each pair had a larger profit; but for that very reason he sold fewer. Two or three gentlemen "of worship" in the neighbourhood might occasionally require a pair of gloves, but it is very doubtful whether any inhabitant of Stratford would ever call for so mere a luxury.

The practical result, at all events, of John Shakspeare's various pursuits does not appear permanently to have met the demands of his establishment; and in his maturer years there are indications still surviving that he was under a cloud of embarrassment. He certainly lost at one time his social position in the town of Stratford; but there is a strong presumption, in *our* construction of the case, that he finally

retrieved it; and for this retrieval of a station which he had forfeited by personal misfortunes or neglect he was altogether indebted to the filial piety of his immortal son.

Meantime the earlier years of the elder Shakspeare wore the aspect of rising prosperity, however unsound might be the basis on which it rested. There can be little doubt that William Shakspeare, from his birth up to his tenth or perhaps his eleventh year, lived in careless plenty, and saw nothing in his father's house but that style of liberal housekeeping which has ever distinguished the upper yeomanry and the rural gentry of England. Probable enough it is that the resources for meeting this liberality were not strictly commensurate with the family income, but were sometimes allowed to entrench, by means of loans or mortgages, upon capital funds. The stress upon the family finances was perhaps at times severe; and that it was borne at all must be imputed to the large and even splendid portion which John Shakspeare received with his wife.

This lady (for such she really was in an eminent sense, by birth as well as by connexions) bore the beautiful name of Mary Arden, a name derived from the ancient forest district[1] of the county; and doubtless she merits a more elaborate notice than our slender materials will furnish. To have been *the mother of Shakspeare*,—how august a title to the reverence of infinite generations, and of centuries beyond the vision of prophecy. A plausible hypothesis has been started in modern times that the facial structure, and that the intellectual conformation, may be deduced more frequently from the corresponding characteristics in the mother than in the father. It is certain that no very great man has ever existed but that his greatness has been rehearsed and predicted in one or other of his parents. And it cannot be denied that in the most eminent men, where we have had the means of pursuing the investigation, the mother has more frequently been repeated and reproduced than the father. We have known cases where the mother has fur-

[1] And probably so called by some remote ancestor who had emigrated from the forest of Ardennes in the Netherlands, *now* for ever memorable to English ears from its proximity to Waterloo.

nished all the intellect, and the father all the moral sensibility; upon which assumption the wonder ceases that Cicero, Lord Chesterfield, and other brilliant men, who took the utmost pains with their sons, should have failed so conspicuously; for possibly the mothers had been women of excessive and even exemplary stupidity. In the case of Shakspeare, each parent, if we had any means of recovering their characteristics, could not fail to furnish a study of the most profound interest; and, with regard to his mother in particular, if the modern hypothesis be true, and if we are indeed to deduce from *her* the stupendous intellect of her son, in that case she must have been a benefactress to her husband's family beyond the promises of fairyland or the dreams of romance; for it is certain that to her chiefly this family was also indebted for their worldly comfort.

Mary Arden was the youngest daughter and the heiress of Robert Arden of Wilmecote, Esq., in the county of Warwick.[1] The family of Arden was even then of great antiquity. About one century and a quarter before the birth of William Shakspeare, a person bearing the same name as his maternal grandfather had been returned by the commissioners in their list of the Warwickshire gentry; he was there styled Robert Arden, Esq. of Bromich. This was in 1433, or the 12th year of Henry VI. In Henry VII's reign, the Ardens received a grant of lands from the crown; and in 1568, four years after the birth of William Shakspeare, Edward Arden, of the same family, was sheriff of the county. Mary Arden was therefore a young lady of excellent descent and connexions, and an heiress of considerable wealth. She brought to her husband, as a marriage portion, the landed estate of Asbies, which, upon any just valuation, must be considered as a handsome dowry for a woman of her station. As this point has been contested, and as it goes a great way towards determining the exact social position of the poet's parents, let us be excused for sifting it a little more narrowly than might

[1] "Robert Arden, a substantial yeoman farmer," is Mr. Halliwell Phillipps's more correct designation of this maternal grandfather of Shakespeare. De Quincey rather exaggerates the social rank of Shakespeare's mother. The old house of her father, where she was probably born, is still to be seen (or was very recently) some miles from Stratford-on-Avon.—M.

else seem warranted by the proportions of our present life. Every question which it can be reasonable to raise at all it must be reasonable to treat with at least so much of minute research as may justify the conclusions which it is made to support.

The estate of Asbies contained fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage. What may we assume to have been the value of its fee-simple? Malone, who allows the total fortune of Mary Arden to have been £110 : 13 : 4, is sure that the value of Asbies could not have been more than one hundred pounds. But why? Because, says he, the "average" rent of land at that time was no more than three shillings per acre. This we deny; but upon that assumption the total yearly rent of fifty-six acres would be exactly eight guineas.[1] And therefore, in assigning the value of Asbies at one hundred pounds, it appears that Malone must have estimated the land at no more than twelve years' purchase, which would carry the value to £100 : 16s. "Even at this estimate," as the latest annotator[2] on this subject *justly* observes, "Mary Arden's portion was a larger one than was usually given to a landed gentleman's daughter." But this writer objects to Malone's principle of valuation. "We find," says he, "that John Shakspeare also farmed the meadow of Tugton, containing sixteen acres, at the rate of

[1] Let not the reader impute to us the gross anachronism of making an estimate for Shakspeare's days in a coin which did not exist until a century, within a couple of years, after Shakspeare's birth, and did not settle to the value of twenty-one shillings until a century after his death. The nerve of such an anachronism would lie in putting the estimate into a mouth of that age. And this is precisely the blunder into which the foolish forger of Vertigern, &c. [the Shakspeare forger, William Henry Ireland, 1777-1835], has fallen. He does not indeed directly mention guineas; but indirectly and virtually he does, by repeatedly giving us accounts imputed to Shakspearian contemporaries in which the sum-total amounts to £5 : 5s.; or to £26 : 5s.; or, again, to £17 : 7 : 6. A man is careful to subscribe £14 : 14s., and so forth. But how could such amounts have arisen unless under a secret reference to guineas, which were not in existence until Charles II's reign; and, moreover, to guineas at their final settlement by law into twenty-one shillings each, which did not take place until George I.'s reign?

[2] Thomas Campbell, the poet, in his eloquent Remarks on the Life and Writings of William Shakspeare, prefixed to a popular edition of the poet's dramatic works: London, 1838.

eleven shillings per acre. Now, what proof has Mr. Malone adduced that the acres of Asbies were not as valuable as those of Tugton? And, if they were so, the former estate must have been worth between three and four hundred pounds." In the main drift of his objections we concur with Mr. Campbell. But, as they are liable to some criticism, let us clear the ground of all plausible cavils, and then see what will be the result. Malone, had he been alive, would probably have answered that Tugton was a farm specially privileged by nature, and that, if any man contended for so unusual a rent as eleven shillings an acre for land not known to him, the *onus probandi* would lie upon *him*. Be it so: eleven shillings is certainly above the ordinary level of rent; but three shillings is below it. We contend that for tolerably good land, situated advantageously,—that is, with a ready access to good markets and good fairs, such as those of Coventry, Birmingham, Gloucester, Worcester, Shrewsbury, &c.,—one noble might be assumed as the annual rent; and that in such situations twenty years' purchase was not a valuation, even in Elizabeth's reign, very unusual. Let us, however, assume the rental at only five shillings, and land at sixteen years' purchase: upon this basis, the rent would be £14, and the value of the fee-simple £224. Now, if it were required to equate that sum with its present value, a very operose[1] calculation might be requisite. But, contenting ourselves with the gross method of making such equations between 1560 and the current century,—that is, multiplying by five,—we shall find the capital value of the estate to be eleven hundred and twenty pounds, whilst the annual rent would be exactly seventy. But, if the estate had been sold, and the purchase-money lent upon mortgage (the only safe mode of investing money at that time), the annual interest would have reached £28, equal to £140 of modern money; for mortgages in Elizabeth's age readily produced ten per cent.

A woman who should bring at this day an annual income of £140 to a provincial tradesman, living in a sort of *rus in urbe*, according to the simple fashions of rustic life, would assuredly be considered as an excellent match. And there

[1] See De Quincey's appended note.—M.

can be little doubt that Mary Arden's dowry it was which, for some ten or a dozen years succeeding to his marriage, raised her husband to so much social consideration in Stratford. In 1550 John Shakspeare is supposed to have first settled in Stratford, having migrated from some other part of Warwickshire. In 1557 he married Mary Arden; in 1565, the year subsequent to the birth of his son William, his third child, he was elected one of the aldermen; and in the year 1568 he became first magistrate of the town, by the title of high bailiff. This year we may assume to have been that in which the prosperity of this family reached its zenith; for in this year it was, over and above the presumptions furnished by his civic honours, that he obtained a grant of arms from Clarencieux of the Heralds' College. On this occasion he declared himself worth five hundred pounds derived from his ancestors. And we really cannot understand the right by which critics, living nearly three centuries from his time, undertake to know his affairs better than himself, and to tax him with either inaccuracy or falsehood. No man would be at leisure to court heraldic honours when he knew himself to be embarrassed, or apprehended that he soon might be so. A man whose anxieties had been fixed at all upon his daily livelihood would, by this chase after the aerial honours of heraldry, have made himself a butt for ridicule such as no fortitude could enable him to sustain.

In 1568, therefore, when his son William would be moving through his fifth year, John Shakspeare (now honoured by the designation of *Master*) would be found at times in the society of the neighbouring gentry. Ten years in advance of this period he was already in difficulties. But there is no proof that these difficulties had then reached a point of degradation, or of memorable distress. The sole positive indications of his decaying condition are that in 1578 he received an exemption from the small weekly assessment levied upon the aldermen of Stratford for the relief of the poor, and that in the following year, 1579, he is found enrolled amongst the defaulters in the payment of taxes. The latter fact undoubtedly goes to prove that, like every man who is falling back in the world, he was

occasionally in arrears. Paying taxes is not like the honours awarded or the processions regulated by Clarencieux: no man is ambitious of precedency there; and, if a laggard pace in that duty is to be received as evidence of pauperism, nine-tenths of the English people might occasionally be classed as paupers. With respect to his liberation from the weekly assessment, that may bear a construction different from the one which it has received. This payment, which could never have been regarded as a burthen, not amounting to five pounds annually of our present money, may have been held up as an exponent of wealth and consideration; and John Shakspeare may have been required to resign it as an honourable distinction not suitable to the circumstances of an embarrassed man. Finally, the fact of his being indebted to Robert Sadler, a baker, in the sum of five pounds, and his being under the necessity of bringing a friend as security for the payment, proves nothing at all. There is not a town in Europe in which opulent men cannot be found that are backward in the payment of their debts. And the probability is that Master Sadler acted like most people who, when they suppose a man to be going down in the world, feel their respect for him sensibly decaying, and think it wise to trample him under foot, provided only in that act of trampling they can squeeze out of him their own individual debt. Like that terrific chorus in Spohr's oratorio of St. Paul, "*Stone him to death*" is the cry of the selfish and the illiberal amongst creditors, alike towards the just and the unjust amongst debtors.

It was the wise and beautiful prayer of Agar, "Give me neither poverty nor riches"; and, doubtless, for quiet, for peace, and the *latentis semita vitæ*, that is the happiest dispensation. But, perhaps, with a view to a school of discipline and of moral fortitude, it might be a more salutary prayer, "Give me riches *and* poverty, and afterwards neither." For the transitional state between riches and poverty will teach a lesson both as to the baseness and the goodness of human nature, and will impress that lesson with a searching force, such as no borrowed experience ever can approach. Most probable it is that Shakspeare drew some of his powerful scenes in the Timon of Athens, those which exhibit the vile-

ness of ingratitude and the impassioned frenzy of misanthropy, from his personal recollections connected with the case of his own father. Possibly, though a cloud of 270 years now veils it, this very Master Sadler, who was so urgent for his five pounds, and who so little apprehended that he should be called over the coals for it in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," may have sate for the portrait of that Lucullus who says of Timon—

> "Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 'tis, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I have dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less: and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his; I have told him on't, but I could never get him from it."

For certain years, perhaps, John Shakspeare moved on in darkness and sorrow—

> "His familiars from his buried fortunes
> Slunk all away; left their false vows with him,
> Like empty purses pick'd: and his poor self,
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
> Walked, like contempt, alone."

We, however, at this day are chiefly interested in the case as it bears upon the education and youthful happiness of the poet. Now, if we suppose that from 1568, the high noon of the family prosperity, to 1578, the first year of their mature embarrassments, one half the interval was passed in stationary sunshine, and the latter half in the gradual twilight of declension, it will follow that the young William had completed his tenth year before he heard the first signals of distress; and for so long a period his education would probably be conducted on as liberal a scale as the resources of Stratford would allow. Through this earliest section of his life he would undoubtedly rank as a gentleman's son, possibly as the leader of his class in Stratford. But what rank he held through the next ten years, or, more generally, what was the standing in society of Shakspeare until he had created a new station for himself by his own exertions in the metropolis, is a question yet unsettled, but

which has been debated as keenly as if it had some great dependencies. Upon this we shall observe that, could we by possibility be called to settle beforehand what rank were best for favouring the development of intellectual powers, the question might wear a face of deep practical importance; but, when the question is simply as to a matter of fact, what *was* the rank held by a man whose intellectual development has long ago been completed, this becomes a mere question of curiosity. The tree has fallen; it is confessedly the noblest of all the forest; and we must therefore conclude that the soil in which it flourished was either the best possible, or, if not so, that anything bad in its properties had been disarmed and neutralized by the vital forces of the plant, or by the benignity of nature. If any future Shakspeare were likely to arise, it might be a problem of great interest to agitate, whether the condition of a poor man or of a gentleman were best fitted to nurse and stimulate his faculties. But, for the actual Shakspeare, since what he was he was, and since nothing greater can be imagined, it is now become a matter of little moment whether his course lay for fifteen or twenty years through the humilities of absolute poverty, or through the chequered paths of gentry lying in the shade. Whatever *was* must, in this case at least, have been the best, since it terminated in producing Shakspeare; and thus far we must all be optimists.

Yet still, it will be urged, the curiosity is not illiberal which would seek to ascertain the precise career through which Shakspeare ran. This we readily concede; and we are anxious ourselves to contribute anything in our power to the settlement of a point so obscure. What we have wished to protest against is the spirit of partisanship in which this question has too generally been discussed. For, whilst some, with a foolish affectation of plebeian sympathies, overwhelm us with the insipid commonplaces about birth and ancient descent, as honours containing nothing meritorious, and rush eagerly into an ostentatious exhibition of all the circumstances which favour the notion of a humble station and humble connexions, others, with equal forgetfulness of true dignity, plead with the intemperance and partiality of a legal advocate for the pretensions of Shakspeare to the hereditary rank of

gentleman. Both parties violate the majesty of the subject. When we are seeking for the sources of the Euphrates or the St. Lawrence, we look for no proportions to the mighty volume of waters in that particular summit amongst the chain of mountains which embosoms its earliest fountains, nor are we shocked at the obscurity of these fountains. Pursuing the career of Mahommed, or of any man who has memorably impressed his own mind or agency upon the revolutions of mankind, we feel solicitude about the circumstances which might surround his cradle to be altogether unseasonable and impertinent. Whether he were born in a hovel or a palace, whether he passed his infancy in squalid poverty, or hedged around by the glittering spears of body-guards, as mere questions of fact may be interesting, but, in the light of either accessories or counter-agencies to the native majesty of the subject, are trivial and below all philosophic valuation. So with regard to the creator of Lear and Hamlet, of Othello and Macbeth; to him from whose golden urns the nations beyond the far Atlantic, the multitude of the isles, and the generations unborn in Australian climes, even to the realms of the rising sun (the *ἀνατολαὶ ἠελίοιο*), must in every age draw perennial streams of intellectual life, we feel that the little accidents of birth and social condition are so unspeakably below the grandeur of the theme, are so irrelevant and disproportioned to the real interest at issue, so incommensurable with any of its relations, that a biographer of Shakspeare at once denounces himself as below his subject if he can entertain such a question as seriously affecting the glory of the poet. In some legends of saints, we find that they were born with a lambent circle or golden aureola about their heads. This angelic coronet shed light alike upon the chambers of a cottage or a palace, upon the gloomy limits of a dungeon or the vast expansion of a cathedral; but the cottage, the palace, the dungeon, the cathedral, were all equally incapable of adding one ray of colour or one pencil of light to the supernatural halo.

Having therefore thus pointedly guarded ourselves from misconstruction, and consenting to entertain the question as one in which we, the worshippers of Shakspeare, have an

interest of curiosity, but in which he, the object of our worship, has no interest of glory, we proceed to state what appears to us the result of the scanty facts surviving, when collated with each other.

By his mother's side, Shakspeare was an authentic gentleman. By his father's he would have stood in a more dubious position; but the effect of municipal honours to raise and illustrate an equivocal rank has always been acknowledged under the popular tendencies of our English political system. From the sort of lead, therefore, which John Shakspeare took at one time amongst his fellow-townsmen, and from his rank of first magistrate, we may presume that, about the year 1568, he had placed himself at the head of the Stratford community. Afterwards he continued for some years to descend from this altitude; and the question is, at what point this gradual degradation may be supposed to have settled. Now we shall avow it as our opinion that the composition of society in Stratford was such that, even had the Shakspeare family maintained their superiority, the main body of their daily associates must still have been found amongst persons below the rank of gentry. The poet must inevitably have mixed chiefly with mechanics and humble tradesmen, for such people composed perhaps the total community. But, had there even been a gentry in Stratford, since they would have marked the distinctions of their rank chiefly by greater reserve of manners, it is probable that, after all, Shakspeare, with his enormity of delight in exhibitions of human nature, would have mostly cultivated that class of society in which the feelings are more elementary and simple, in which the thoughts speak a plainer language, and in which the restraints of factitious or conventional decorum are exchanged for the restraints of mere sexual decency. It is a noticeable fact to all who have looked upon human life with an eye of strict attention that the abstract image of womanhood, in its loveliness, its delicacy, and its modesty, nowhere makes itself more impressive or more advantageously felt than in the humblest cottages, because it is there brought into immediate juxtaposition with the grossness of manners and the careless license of language incident to the fathers and brothers of the house. And this is more especially true

in a nation of unaffected sexual gallantry,[1] such as the English and the Gothic races in general; since, under the immunity which their women enjoy from all servile labours of a coarse or out-of-doors order, by as much lower as they descend in the scale of rank, by so much more do they benefit under the force of contrast with the men of their own level. A young man of that class, however noble in appearance, is somewhat degraded in the eyes of women by the necessity which his indigence imposes of working under a master; but a beautiful young woman, in the very poorest family, unless she enters upon a life of domestic servitude (in which case her labours are light, suited to her sex, and withdrawn from the public eye), so long in fact as she stays under her father's roof, is as perfectly her own mistress and *sui juris* as the daughter of an earl. This personal dignity, brought into stronger relief by the mercenary employments of her male connexions, and the feminine gentleness of her voice and manners, exhibited under the same advantages of contrast, oftentimes combine to make a young cottage beauty as fascinating an object as any woman of any station.

Hence we may in part account for the great event of Shakspeare's early manhood—his premature marriage. It has always been known, or at least traditionally received for a fact, that Shakspeare had married whilst yet a boy, and that his wife was unaccountably older than himself. In the very earliest biographical sketch of the poet, compiled by Rowe from materials collected by Betterton the actor,[2] it was stated (and that statement is now ascertained to have been correct) that he had married Anne Hathaway, "the daughter of a substantial yeoman." Further than this nothing was known. But in September 1836 was published a very remarkable document, which gives the assurance of law to the time and fact of this event, yet still, unless collated with another record, does nothing to lessen the mystery which had previously surrounded its circumstances. This document consists of two parts: the first, and principal, according to the logic of the case, though second according to the arrangement, being a *license*

[1] See De Quincey's appended note.—M.

[2] The life was prefixed to Rowe's edition of Shakspeare in 1709.—M.

for the marriage of William Shakspeare with Anne Hathaway, under the condition "of *once* asking of the bannes of matrimony"—that is, in effect, dispensing with two out of the three customary askings; the second or subordinate part of the document being a *bond* entered into by two sureties, viz. Fulke Sandells and John Rychardson, both described as *agricolæ* or yeomen, and both marksmen (that is, incapable of writing, and therefore subscribing by means of *marks*), for the payment of forty pounds sterling, in the event of Shakspeare, yet a minor, and incapable of binding himself, failing to fulfil the conditions of the license. In the bond, drawn up in Latin, there is no mention of Shakspeare's name; but in the license, which is altogether English, *his* name, of course, stands foremost; and, as it may gratify the reader to see the very words and orthography of the original, we here extract the *operative* part of this document, prefacing only that the license is attached by way of explanation to the bond. "The condition of this obligation is suche that, if herafter there shall not appere any lawfull lett or impediment, by reason of any precontract, &c., but that Willm. Shagspere, one thone ptie [on the one party], and Anne Hathwey of Stratford, in the diocess of Worcester, maiden, may lawfully solemnize matrimony together, and in the same afterwards remaine and continew like man and wiffe, and, moreover, if the said Willm Shagspere do not proceed to solemnization of mariadg with the said Anne Hathwey without the consent of hir frinds;—then the said obligation [viz., to pay forty pounds] to be voyd and of none effect, or els to stand & abide in full force and vertue."

What are we to think of this document? Trepidation and anxiety are written upon its face. The parties are not to be married by a special license; not even by an ordinary license; in that case no proclamation of banns, no public asking at all, would have been requisite. Economical scruples are consulted; and yet the regular movement of the marriage "through the bell-ropes"[1] is disturbed. Economy, which

[1] Amongst people of humble rank in England, who only were ever asked in church until the new-fangled systems of marriage came up within the last ten or fifteen years, during the currency of the three Sundays on which the banns were proclaimed by the clergyman from the

retards the marriage, is here evidently in collision with some opposite principle which precipitates it. How is all this to be explained? Much light is afforded by the date when illustrated by another document. The bond bears date on the 28th day of November in the 25th year of our lady the queen; that is, in 1582. Now, the baptism of Shakspeare's eldest child, Susanna, is registered on the 26th of May in the year following. Suppose, therefore, that his marriage was solemnized on the 1st day of December: it was barely possible that it could be earlier, considering that the sureties, drinking perhaps at Worcester throughout the 28th of November, would require the 29th, in so dreary a season, for their return to Stratford; after which some preparation might be requisite to the bride, since the marriage was *not* celebrated at Stratford. Next suppose the birth of Miss Susanna to have occurred, like her father's, two days before her baptism, viz., on the 24th of May. From December the 1st to May the 24th, both days inclusively, are 175 days; which, divided by seven, gives precisely twenty-five weeks,—that is to say, six months short by one week. Oh, fie, Miss Susanna! you came rather before you were wanted.

Mr. Campbell's comment upon the affair is that, "*if* this was the case," viz. if the baptism were really solemnized on the 26th of May, "the poet's first child would *appear* to have been born only six months and eleven days after the bond was entered into." And he then concludes that, on this assumption, "Miss Susanna Shakspeare came into the world a little prematurely." But this is to doubt where there never was any ground for doubting: the baptism was *certainly* on the 26th of May; and, in the next place, the calculation of six months and eleven days is sustained by substituting lunar months for calendar, and then only by supposing the marriage to have been celebrated on the very day of subscribing the bond in Worcester, and the baptism to have been coincident with the birth; of which suppositions the latter is improbable, and the former, considering the situation of Worcester, impossible.

reading-desk, the young couple elect were said jocosely to be "hanging in the bell-ropes"; alluding perhaps to the joyous peal contingent on the final completion of the marriage.

Strange it is that, whilst all biographers have worked with so much zeal upon the most barren dates or most baseless traditions in the great poet's life, realising in a manner the chimeras of Laputa, and endeavouring "to extract sunbeams from cucumbers," such a story with regard to such an event, no fiction of village scandal, but involved in legal documents,—a story so significant and so eloquent to the intelligent,—should formerly have been dismissed without notice of any kind, and even now, after the discovery of 1836, with nothing beyond a slight conjectural insinuation. For our parts, we should have been the last amongst the biographers to unearth any forgotten scandal, or, after so vast a lapse of time, and when the grave had shut out all but charitable thoughts, to point any moral censures at a simple case of natural frailty, youthful precipitancy of passion, of all trespasses the most venial where the final intentions are honourable. But in this case there seems to have been something more in motion than passion or the ardour of youth. "I like not" says Parson Evans (alluding to Falstaff in masquerade), "I like not when a woman has a great peard; I spy a great peard under her muffler." Neither do we like the spectacle of a mature young woman, five years past her majority, wearing the semblance of having been led astray by a boy who had still two years and a half to run of his minority. Shakspeare himself, looking back on this part of his youthful history from his maturest years, breathes forth pathetic counsels against the errors into which his own inexperience had been ensnared. The disparity of years between himself and his wife he notices in a beautiful scene of the Twelfth Night. The Duke Orsino, observing the sensibility which the pretended Cesario had betrayed on hearing some touching old snatches of a love strain, swears that his beardless page must have felt the passion of love; which the other admits. Upon this the dialogue proceeds thus:—

> "*Duke.* What kind of woman is't?
> *Viola.* Of your complexion.
> *Duke.* She is not worth thee then:—What years?
> *Viola.* I' faith,
> About your years, my lord.
> *Duke.* Too old, by heaven. *Let still the woman take*

An elder than herself: so wears she to him,
So sways she level in her husband's heart.
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,
Than women's are.

Viola. I think it well, my lord.

Duke. Then *let thy love be younger than thyself,*
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour."

These counsels were uttered nearly twenty years after the event in his own life to which they probably look back; for this play is supposed to have been written in Shakspeare's thirty-eighth year. And we may read an earnestness in pressing the point as to the *inverted* disparity of years which indicates pretty clearly an appeal to the lessons of his personal experience. But his other indiscretion, in having yielded so far to passion and opportunity as to crop by prelibation, and before they were hallowed, those flowers of paradise which belonged to his marriage-day,—this he adverts to with even more solemnity of sorrow, and with more pointed energy of moral reproof, in the very last drama which is supposed to have proceeded from his pen, and therefore with the force and sanctity of testamentary counsel. The Tempest is all but ascertained to have been composed in 1611,—that is, about five years before the poet's death; and indeed could not have been composed much earlier; for the very incident which suggested the basis of the plot, and of the local scene, viz. the shipwreck of Sir George Somers on the Bermudas (which were in consequence denominated the Somers Islands), did not occur until the year 1609. In the opening of the fourth act, Prospero formally betrothes his daughter to Ferdinand; and in doing so he pays the prince a well-merited compliment of having "worthily purchas'd" this rich jewel by the patience with which, for her sake, he had supported harsh usage, and other painful circumstances of his trial. But, he adds solemnly,

"If thou dost break her virgin knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may
With full and holy rite be minister'd";

in that case what would follow?

"No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fall,
To make this contract grow ; *but barren hate,*
Sour-eyed disdain and discord shall bestrew
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly
That you shall hate it both. Therefore take heed,
As Hymen's lamps shall light you."

The young prince assures him, in reply, that no strength of opportunity, concurring with the uttermost temptation,—not

"the murkiest den,
The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion
Our worser genius can——"

should ever prevail to lay asleep his jealousy of self-control, so as to take any advantage of Miranda's innocence. And he adds an argument for this abstinence, by way of reminding Prospero that not honour only, but even prudential care of his own happiness, is interested in the observance of his promise. Any unhallowed anticipation would, as he insinuates,

"Take away
The edge of that day's celebration,
When I shall think or Phœbus' steeds are founder'd
Or night kept chain'd below";

that is, when even the winged hours would seem to move too slowly. Even thus Prospero is not quite satisfied: during his subsequent dialogue with Ariel, we are to suppose that Ferdinand, in conversing apart with Miranda, betrays more impassioned ardour than the wise magician altogether approves. The prince's caresses have not been unobserved; and thus Prospero renews his warning:

"Look thou be true: do not give dalliance
Too much the rein: the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire i' the blood: be more abstemious,
Or else—good night your vow."

The royal lover re-assures him of his loyalty to his engagements; and again the wise father, so honourably jealous for his daughter, professes himself satisfied with the prince's pledges.

Now, in all these emphatic warnings, uttering the language "of that sad wisdom folly leaves behind," who can avoid

reading, as in subtile hieroglyphics, the secret record of Shakspeare's own nuptial disappointments? We, indeed,—that is, universal posterity through every age,—have reason to rejoice in these disappointments; for to them, past all doubt, we are indebted for Shakspeare's subsequent migration to London, and his public occupation, which, giving him a deep pecuniary interest in the productions of his pen, such as no other literary application of his powers could have approached in that day, were eventually the means of drawing forth those divine works which have survived their author for our everlasting benefit.

Our own reading and deciphering of the whole case is as follows. The Shakspeares were a handsome family, both father and sons. This we assume upon the following grounds:—First, on the presumption arising out of John Shakspeare's having won the favour of a young heiress higher in rank than himself; secondly, on the presumption involved in the fact of three amongst his four sons having gone upon the stage, to which the most obvious (and perhaps in those days a *sine qua non*) recommendation would be a good person and a pleasing countenance; thirdly, on the direct evidence of Aubrey, who assures us that William Shakspeare was a handsome and a well-shaped man; fourthly, on the implicit evidence of the Stratford monument, which exhibits a man of good figure and noble countenance; fifthly, on the confirmation of this evidence by the Chandos portrait, which exhibits noble features, illustrated by the utmost sweetness of expression; sixthly, on the selection of theatrical parts which it is known that Shakspeare personated, most of them being such as required some dignity of form, viz. kings, the athletic (though aged) follower of an athletic young man, and supernatural beings. On these grounds, direct or circumstantial, we believe ourselves warranted in assuming that William Shakspeare was a handsome and even noble-looking boy. Miss Anne Hathaway had herself probably some personal attractions, and, if an indigent girl, who looked for no pecuniary advantages, would probably have been early sought in marriage. But, as the daughter of "a substantial yeoman," who would expect some fortune in his daughter's suitors, she had, to speak coarsely, a little outlived her

market. Time she had none to lose. William Shakspeare pleased her eye; and the gentleness of his nature made him an apt subject for female blandishments, possibly for female arts. Without imputing, however, to this Anne Hathaway anything so hateful as a settled plot for ensnaring him, it was easy enough for a mature woman, armed with such inevitable advantages of experience and of self-possession, to draw onward a blushing novice, and, without directly creating opportunities, to place him in the way of turning to account such as naturally offered. Young boys are generally flattered by the condescending notice of grown-up women; and perhaps Shakspeare's own lines upon a similar situation, to a young boy adorned with the same natural gifts as himself, may give us the key to the result:—

> "Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won;
> Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed;
> And, when a woman woos, what woman's son
> Will sourly leave her till she hath prevailed?"

Once, indeed, entangled in such a pursuit, any person of manly feelings would be sensible that he had no retreat; *that* would be—to insult a woman, grievously to wound her sexual pride, and to insure her lasting scorn and hatred. These were consequences which the gentle-minded Shakspeare could not face; he pursued his good fortunes, half perhaps in heedlessness, half in desperation, until he was roused by the clamorous displeasure of her family upon first discovering the situation of their kinswoman. For such a situation there could be but one atonement, and that was hurried forward by both parties; whilst, out of delicacy towards the bride, the wedding was not celebrated in Stratford (where the register contains no notice of such an event); nor, as Malone imagined, in Weston-upon-Avon, that being in the diocese of Gloucester; but in some parish, as yet undiscovered, in the diocese of Worcester.

But now arose a serious question as to the future maintenance of the young people. John Shakspeare was depressed in his circumstances, and he had other children besides William, viz. three sons and a daughter. The elder Lives have represented him as burdened with ten; but this was an error, arising out of the confusion between John Shakspeare

the glover and John Shakspeare a shoemaker. This error has been thus far of use, that, by exposing the fact of two John Shakspeares (not kinsmen) residing in Stratford-upon-Avon, it has satisfactorily proved the name to be amongst those which are locally indigenous to Warwickshire. Meantime, it is now ascertained that John Shakspeare the glover had only eight children, viz. four daughters and four sons. The order of their succession was this:—Joan, Margaret, WILLIAM, Gilbert, a second Joan, Anne, Richard, and Edmund. Three of the daughters, viz. the two eldest of the family, Joan and Margaret, together with Anne, died in childhood: all the rest attained mature ages, and of these William was the eldest. This might give him some advantage in his father's regard; but in a question of pecuniary provision precedency amongst the children of an insolvent is nearly nominal. For the present John Shakspeare could do little for his son; and, under these circumstances, perhaps the father of Anne Hathaway would come forward to assist the new-married couple. This condition of dependency would furnish matter for painful feelings and irritating words: the youthful husband, whose mind would be expanding as rapidly as the leaves and blossoms of spring-time in polar latitudes, would soon come to appreciate the sort of wiles by which he had been caught. The female mind is quick, and almost gifted with the power of witchcraft, to decipher what is passing in the thoughts of familiar companions. Silent and forbearing as William Shakspeare might be, Anne, his staid wife, would read his secret reproaches; ill would she dissemble her wrath, and the less so from the consciousness of having deserved them. It is no uncommon case for women to feel anger in connexion with one subject and to express it in connexion with another; which other, perhaps (except as a serviceable mask), would have been a matter of indifference to their feelings. Anne would therefore reply to those inevitable reproaches which her own sense must presume to be lurking in her husband's heart by others equally stinging, on his inability to support his family, and on his obligations to her father's purse. Shakspeare, we may be sure, would be ruminating every hour on the means of his deliverance from so painful a dependency; and at length,

after four years' conjugal discord, he would resolve upon that plan of solitary emigration to the metropolis which, at the same time that it released him from the humiliation of domestic feuds, succeeded so splendidly for his worldly prosperity, and with a train of consequences so vast for all future ages.

Such, we are persuaded, was the real course of Shakspeare's transition from school-boy pursuits to his public career; and upon the known temperament of Shakspeare, his genial disposition to enjoy life without disturbing his enjoyment by fretting anxieties, we build the conclusion that, had his friends furnished him with ampler funds, and had his marriage been well assorted or happy, we—the world of posterity—should have lost the whole benefit and delight which we have since reaped from his matchless faculties. The motives which drove him *from* Stratford are clear enough; but what motives determined his course *to* London, and especially to the stage, still remain to be explained. Stratford-upon-Avon, lying in the high road from London through Oxford to Birmingham (or more generally to the north), had been continually visited by some of the best comedians during Shakspeare's childhood. One or two of the most respectable metropolitan actors were natives of Stratford. These would be well known to the elder Shakspeare. But, apart from that accident, it is notorious that mere legal necessity and usage would compel all companies of actors, upon coming into any town, to seek, in the first place, from the chief magistrate, a license for opening a theatre, and next, over and above this public sanction, to seek his personal favour and patronage. As an alderman, therefore, but still more whilst clothed with the official powers of chief magistrate, the poet's father would have opportunities of doing essential services to many persons connected with the London stage. The conversation of comedians acquainted with books, fresh from the keen and sparkling circles of the metropolis, and filled with racy anecdotes of the court, as well as of public life generally, could not but have been fascinating by comparison with the stagnant society of Stratford. Hospitalities on a liberal scale would be offered to these men: not impossibly this fact might be one principal key to those dilapida-

tions which the family estate had suffered. These actors, on *their* part, would retain a grateful sense of the kindness they had received, and would seek to repay it to John Shakspeare, now that he was depressed in his fortunes, as opportunities might offer. His eldest son, growing up a handsome young man, and beyond all doubt from his earliest days of most splendid colloquial powers (for assuredly of *him* it may be taken for granted,

"Nec licuit populis parvum te, Nile, videre"),

would be often reproached in a friendly way for burying himself in a country life. These overtures, prompted alike by gratitude to the father, and a real selfish interest in the talents of the son, would at length take a definite shape; and, upon some clear understanding as to the terms of such an arrangement, William Shakspeare would at length (about 1586, according to the received account,—that is, in the fifth year of his married life, and the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of his age), unaccompanied by wife or children, translate himself to London. Later than 1586 it could not well be; for already in 1589 it has been recently ascertained that he held a share in the property of a leading theatre.

We must here stop to notice, and the reader will allow us to notice with summary indignation, the slanderous and idle tale which represents Shakspeare as having fled to London in the character of a criminal from the persecutions of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot. This tale has long been propagated under two separate impulses: chiefly, perhaps, under the vulgar love of pointed and glaring contrasts,—the splendour of the man was in this instance brought into a sort of epigrammatic antithesis with the humility of his fortunes; secondly, under a baser impulse, the malicious pleasure of seeing a great man degraded. Accordingly, as in the case of Milton,[1] it has been affirmed that Shakspeare had suffered corporal chastisement,—in fact (we abhor to utter such words), that he had been judicially whipped. Now, first of all, let us mark the inconsistency of this tale: the poet was whipped,—that is, he was punished most disproportionately,—and yet he fled to avoid punishment. Next, we

[1] See De Quincey's appended note.—M.

are informed that his offence was deer-stealing, and from the park of Sir Thomas Lucy. And it has been well ascertained that Sir Thomas had no deer, and had no park. Moreover, deer-stealing was regarded by our ancestors exactly as poaching is regarded by us. Deer ran wild in all the great forests; and no offence was looked upon as so venial, none so compatible with a noble Robin-Hood style of character, as this very trespass upon what were regarded as *feræ naturæ*, and not at all as domestic property. But, had it been otherwise, a trespass was not punishable with whipping; nor had Sir Thomas Lucy the power to irritate a whole community like Stratford-upon-Avon by branding with permanent disgrace a young man so closely connected with three at least of the best families in the neighbourhood. Besides, had Shakspeare suffered any dishonour of that kind, the scandal would infallibly have pursued him at his very heels to London; and in that case Greene, who has left on record, in a posthumous work of 1592, his malicious feelings towards Shakspeare, could not have failed to notice it. For be it remembered that a judicial flagellation contains a twofold ignominy: flagellation is ignominious in its own nature, even though unjustly inflicted, and by a ruffian; secondly, any judicial punishment is ignominious, even though not wearing a shade of personal degradation. Now, a judicial flagellation includes both features of dishonour. And is it to be imagined that an enemy, searching with the diligence of malice for matter against Shakspeare, should have failed, six years after the event, to hear of that very memorable disgrace which had exiled him from Stratford, and was the very occasion of his first resorting to London; or that a leading company of players in the metropolis, *one of whom*, and a chief one, *was his own townsman*, should cheerfully adopt into their society, as an honoured partner, a young man yet flagrant from the lash of the executioner or the beadle?

This tale is fabulous, and rotten to its core; yet even this does less dishonour to Shakspeare's memory than the sequel attached to it. A sort of scurrilous rondeau, consisting of nine lines, so loathsome in its brutal stupidity and so vulgar in its expression that we shall not pollute our pages by transcribing it, has been imputed to Shakspeare ever since the

days of the credulous Rowe. The total point of this idiot's drivel consists in calling Sir Thomas "an asse"; and well it justifies the poet's own remark,—"Let there be gall enough in thy ink, no matter though thou write with a goose pen." Our own belief is that these lines were a production of Charles II's reign, and applied to a Sir Thomas Lucy not very far removed, if at all, from the age of him who first picked up the precious filth: the phrase "parliament *member*" we believe to be quite unknown in the colloquial use of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

But, that we may rid ourselves once and for ever of this outrageous calumny upon Shakspeare's memory, we shall pursue the story to its final stage. Even Malone has been thoughtless enough to accredit this closing chapter, which contains, in fact, such a superfetation of folly as the annals of human dulness do not exceed. Let us recapitulate the points of the story:—A baronet, who has no deer and no park, is supposed to persecute a poet for stealing these aerial deer out of this aerial park, both lying in *nephelococcygia.* The poet sleeps upon this wrong for eighteen years; but at length, hearing that his persecutor is dead and buried, he conceives bloody thoughts of revenge. And this revenge he purposes to execute by picking a hole in his dead enemy's coat-of-arms. Is this coat-of-arms, then, Sir Thomas Lucy's? Why, no: Malone admits that it is not. For the poet, suddenly recollecting that this ridicule would settle upon the son of his enemy, selects another coat-of-arms, with which his dead enemy never had any connexion, and he spends his thunder and lightning upon this irrelevant object; and, after all, the ridicule itself lies in a Welchman's mispronouncing one single heraldic term—a Welchman who mispronounces all words. The last act of the poet's malice recalls to us a sort of jest-book story of an Irishman, the vulgarity of which the reader will pardon in consideration of its relevancy. The Irishman, having lost a pair of silk stockings, mentions to a friend that he has taken steps for recovering them by an advertisement offering a reward to the finder. His friend objects that the costs of advertising, and the reward, would eat out the full value of the silk stockings. But to this the Irishman replies, with a knowing air, that he is not so green

as to have overlooked *that*, and that, to keep down the reward, he had advertised the stockings as worsted. Not at all less flagrant is the bull ascribed to Shakspeare when he is made to punish a dead man by personalities meant for his exclusive ear, through his coat-of-arms, but at the same time, with the express purpose of blunting and defeating the edge of his own scurrility, is made to substitute for the real arms some others which had no more relation to the dead enemy than they had to the poet himself. This is the very sublime of folly, beyond which human dotage cannot advance.

It is painful, indeed, and dishonourable to human nature, that, whenever men of vulgar habits and of poor education wish to impress us with a feeling of respect for a man's talents, they are sure to cite, by way of evidence, some gross instance of malignity. Power, in their minds, is best illustrated by malice or by the infliction of pain. To this unwelcome fact we have some evidence in the wretched tale which we have just dismissed; and there is another of the same description, to be found in all Lives of Shakspeare, which we will expose to the contempt of the reader whilst we are in this field of discussion, that we may not afterwards have to resume so disgusting a subject.

This poet, who was a model of gracious benignity in his manners, and of whom, amidst our general ignorance, thus much is perfectly established, that the term *gentle* was almost as generally and by prescriptive right associated with his name as the affix of *venerable* with Bede, or *judicious* with Hooker, is alleged to have insulted a friend by an imaginary epitaph beginning "*Ten in the Hundred*," and supposing him to be damned, yet without wit enough (which surely the Stratford bellman could have furnished) for devising any, even fanciful, reason for such a supposition; upon which the comment of some foolish critic is,—"The *sharpness of the satire* is said to have stung the man so much that he never forgave it." We have heard of the sting in the tail atoning for the brainless head; but in this doggerel the tail is surely as stingless as the head is brainless. For, 1*st*, *Ten in the Hundred* could be no reproach in Shakspeare's time, any more than to call a man *Three-and-a-half-per-cent* in this present year 1838; except, indeed, amongst those foolish persons

who built their morality upon the Jewish ceremonial law. Shakspeare himself took ten per cent. *2dly*, It happens that John Combe, so far from being the object of the poet's scurrility, or viewing the poet as an object of implacable resentment, was a Stratford friend; that one of his family was affectionately remembered in Shakspeare's will by the bequest of his sword; and that John Combe himself recorded his perfect charity with Shakspeare by leaving him a legacy of £5 sterling. And in this lies the key to the whole story. For, *3dly*, the four lines were written and printed before Shakspeare was born. The name Combe is a common one; and some stupid fellow, who had seen the name in Shakspeare's will, and happened also to have seen the lines in a collection of epigrams, chose to connect the cases by attributing an identity to the two John Combes, though at war with chronology.

Finally, there is another specimen of doggerel attributed to Shakspeare, which is not equally unworthy of him, because not equally malignant, but otherwise equally below his intellect, no less than his scholarship; we mean the inscription on his grave-stone. This, as a sort of *siste viator* appeal to future sextons, is worthy of the grave-digger or the parish-clerk, who was probably its author. Or it may have been an antique formula, like the vulgar record of ownership in books—

> "Anthony Timothy Dolthead's book:
> God give him grace therein to look."

Thus far the matter is of little importance; and it might have been supposed that malignity itself could hardly have imputed such trash to Shakspeare. But, when we find, even in this short compass, scarcely wider than the posy of a ring, room found for traducing the poet's memory, it becomes important to say that the leading sentiment, the horror expressed at any disturbance offered to his bones, is not one to which Shakspeare could have attached the slightest weight; far less could have outraged the sanctities of place and subject by affixing to any sentiment whatever (and, according to the fiction of the case, his farewell sentiment) the sanction of a curse.

Filial veneration and piety towards the memory of this great man have led us into a digression that might have been unseasonable in any cause less weighty than one having for its object to deliver his honoured name from a load of the most brutal malignity. Never more, we hope and venture to believe, will any thoughtless biographer impute to Shakspeare the asinine doggerel with which the uncritical blundering of his earliest biographer has caused his name to be dishonoured. We now resume the thread of our biography. The stream of history is centuries in working itself clear of any calumny with which it has once been polluted.

Most readers will be aware of an old story, according to which Shakspeare gained his livelihood for some time after coming to London, by holding the horses of those who rode to the play. This legend is as idle as any one of those which we have just exposed. No custom ever existed of riding on horseback to the play. Gentlemen who rode valuable horses would assuredly not expose them systematically to the injury of standing exposed to cold for two or even four hours; and persons of inferior rank would not ride on horseback in the town. Besides, had such a custom ever existed, stables (or sheds at least) would soon have arisen to meet the public wants; and in some of the dramatic sketches of the day, which noticed every fashion as it arose, this would not have been overlooked. The story is traced originally to Sir William Davenant. Betterton the actor, who professed to have received it from him, passed it onwards to Rowe, he to Pope, Pope to Bishop Newton, the editor of Milton, and Newton to Dr. Johnson. This pedigree of the fable, however, adds nothing to its credit, and multiplies the chances of some mistake. Another fable, not much less absurd, represents Shakspeare as having from the very first been borne upon the establishment of the theatre,—and so far contradicts the other fable,—but originally in the very humble character of *call-boy* or deputy prompter, whose business it was to summon each performer according to his order of coming upon the stage. This story, however, quite as much as the other, is irreconcilable with the discovery, recently made by Mr. Collier, that in 1589 Shakspeare was a shareholder in

the important property of a principal London theatre.[1] It seems destined that all the undoubted facts of Shakspeare's life should come to us through the channel of legal documents, which are better evidence even than imperial medals; whilst, on the other hand, all the fabulous anecdotes, not having an attorney's seal to them, seem to have been the fictions of the wonder-maker. The plain presumption from the record of Shakspeare's situation in 1589, coupled with the fact that his first arrival in London was possibly not until 1587, but, according to the earliest account, not before 1586, a space of time which leaves but little room for any remarkable changes of situation, seems to be that, either in requital of services done to the players by the poet's family, or in consideration of money advanced by his father-in-law, or on account of Shakspeare's personal accomplishments as an actor and as an adapter of dramatic works to the stage,—for one of these reasons, or for all of them united, William Shakspeare, about the twenty-third year of his age, was adopted into the partnership of a respectable histrionic company, possessing a first-rate theatre in the metropolis. If 1586 were the year in which he came up to London, it seems probable enough that his immediate motive to that step was the increasing distress of his father; for in that year John Shakspeare resigned the office of alderman. There is, however, a bare possibility that Shakspeare might have gone to London about the time when he completed his twenty-first year,—that is, in the spring of 1585,—but not earlier. Nearly two years after the birth of his eldest daughter Susanna, his wife lay in for a second and a *last* time; but she then brought her husband twins, a son and a daughter. These children were baptized in February of the year 1585; so that Shakspeare's whole family of three children were born and baptized two months before he completed his majority. The twins were baptized by the names of Hamnet and Judith, those being the names of two amongst their sponsors, viz. Mr. Sadler

[1] This is one of the Collier documents now rejected as spurious, and part of this paragraph of De Quincey's paper is vitiated by that fact. Mr. Halliwell Phillipps avers that there is not a particle of evidence respecting Shakespeare's career after 1587 "till he is discovered as a rising actor and dramatist in 1592."—M.

and his wife. Hamnet, which is a remarkable name in itself, becomes still more so from its resemblance to the immortal name of Hamlet[1] the Dane; it was, however, the real baptismal name of Mr. Sadler, a friend of Shakspeare's, about fourteen years older than himself. Shakspeare's son must then have been most interesting to his heart, both as a twin-child and as his only boy. He died in 1596, when he was about eleven years old. Both daughters survived their father; both married; both left issue, and thus gave a chance for continuing the succession from the great poet. But all the four grandchildren died without offspring.

Of Shakspeare personally, at least of Shakspeare the man, as distinguished from the author, there remains little more to record. Already in 1592, Greene, in his posthumous "Groat's-worth of Wit," had expressed the earliest vocation of Shakspeare in the following sentence:—"There is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers; in his own conceit the only *Shakscene* in a country"! This alludes to Shakspeare's office of re-casting, and even re-composing, dramatic works, so as to fit them for representation; and Master Greene, it is probable, had suffered in his self-estimation, or in his purse, by the alterations in some piece of his own which the duty of Shakspeare to the general interests of the theatre had obliged him to make.

In 1591 it has been supposed that Shakspeare wrote his first drama, the "Two Gentlemen of Verona,"—the least characteristically marked of all his plays, and, with the exception of "Love's Labour's Lost," the least interesting.[2] From this year, 1591, to that of 1611, are just twenty years; within which space lie the whole dramatic creations of Shak-

[1] And singular enough it is, as well as interesting, that Shakspeare had so entirely superseded to his own ear and memory the name Hamnet by the dramatic name of Hamlet that, in writing his will, he actually mis-spells the name of his friend Sadler, and calls him Hamlet. His son, however, who should have familiarized the true name to his ear, had then been dead for twenty years. [The fact, however, is that *Hamnet* and *Hamlet* were interchangeable forms of the name among the Stratford-on-Avon people, independently of Shakespeare or his play.—M.]

[2] One is surprised to find *Love's Labour's Lost* so characterised by De Quincey. Biographically and in other respects, it is a peculiarly interesting play.—M.

speare, averaging nearly one for every six months. In 1611 was written the "Tempest," which is supposed to have been the last of all Shakspeare's works. Even on that account, as Campbell feelingly observes, it has "a sort of sacredness"; and it is a most remarkable fact, and one calculated to make a man superstitious, that in this play the great enchanter Prospero,—in whom, "*as if conscious,*" says Mr. Campbell, "*that this would be his last work,* the poet has been *inspired to typify himself as a wise, potent, and benevolent magician*"; of whom, indeed, as of Shakspeare himself, it may be said that "within that circle" (the circle of his own art) "none durst tread but he,"—solemnly and for ever renounces his mysterious functions, symbolically breaks his enchanter's wand, and declares that he will bury his books, his science, and his secrets

> "Deeper than did ever plummet sound."

Nay, it is even ominous that in this play, and from the voice of Prospero, issues that magnificent prophecy of the total destruction which should one day swallow up

> "The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea all which it inherit."

And this prophecy is followed immediately by a most profound ejaculation, gathering into one pathetic abstraction the total philosophy of life:

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of; and our little life
> Is rounded by a sleep";

that is, in effect, our life is a little tract of feverish vigils, surrounded and islanded by a shoreless ocean of sleep,—sleep before birth, sleep after death.

These remarkable passages were probably not undesigned; but, if we suppose them to have been thrown off without conscious notice of their tendencies, then, according to the superstition of the ancient Grecians, they would have been regarded as prefiguring words, prompted by the secret genius that accompanies every man, such as insure along with them their own accomplishment. With or without intention, however, it is believed that Shakspeare wrote nothing more after

this exquisite romantic drama. With respect to the remainder of his personal history, Dr. Drake and others have supposed that, during the twenty years from 1591 to 1611, he visited Stratford often, and latterly once a-year.

In 1589 he had possessed some share in a theatre; in 1596 he had a considerable share. Through Lord Southampton, as a surviving friend of Lord Essex, who was viewed as the martyr to his Scottish politics, there can be no doubt that Shakspeare had acquired the favour of James I.; and accordingly, on the 29th of May 1603, about two months after the king's accession to the throne of England, a patent was granted to the company of players who possessed the Globe Theatre; in which patent Shakspeare's name stands second. This patent raised the company to the rank of his majesty's servants, whereas previously they are supposed to have been simply the servants of the Lord Chamberlain. Perhaps it was in grateful acknowledgment of this royal favour that Shakspeare afterwards, in 1606, paid that sublime compliment to the house of Stuart which is involved in the vision shown to Macbeth. This vision is managed with exquisite skill: it was impossible to display the whole series of princes from Macbeth to James I.; but he beholds the posterity of Banquo, one "gold-bound brow" succeeding to another, until he comes to an eighth apparition of a Scottish king

> "Who bears a glass
> Which shows him many more; and some he sees
> Who *twofold* balls and *treble* sceptres carry";

thus bringing down without tedium the long succession to the very person of James I. by the symbolic image of the two crowns united on one head.

About the beginning of the century Shakspeare had become rich enough to purchase the best house in Stratford, called *The Great House*, which name he altered to *New Place;* and in 1602 he bought 107 acres adjacent to this house for a sum (£320) corresponding to about 1500 guineas of modern money. Malone thinks that he purchased the house as early as 1597; and it is certain that about that time he was able to assist his father in obtaining a renewed grant of arms from the Heralds' College, and therefore, of course, to re-establish

his father's fortunes. Ten years of well-directed industry, viz. from 1591 to 1601, and the prosperity of the theatre in which he was a proprietor, had raised him to affluence; and after another ten years, improved with the same success, he was able to retire with an income of £300, or (according to the customary computations) in modern money of £1500, per annum. Shakspeare was in fact the first man of letters,—Pope the second, and Sir Walter Scott the third,—who, in Great Britain, has ever realized a large fortune by literature; or in Christendom, if we except Voltaire, and two dubious cases in Italy. The four or five latter years of his life Shakspeare passed in dignified ease, in profound meditation, we may be sure, and in universal respect, at his native town of Stratford; and there he died on the 23d of April 1616.[1]

His daughter Susanna had been married, on the 5th of June of the year 1607, to Dr. John Hall,[2] a physician in Stratford. The doctor died in November 1635, aged sixty; his wife, at the age of sixty-six, on July 11, 1640. They had one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, born in 1608, married April 22, 1626 to Thomas Nashe, Esq., left a widow in 1647, and subsequently re-married to Sir John Barnard; but this Lady Barnard, the sole grand-daughter of the poet, had no children by either marriage. The other daughter, Judith, on February 10, 1616 (about ten weeks before her father's death), married Mr. Thomas Quiney of Stratford, by whom she had three sons, Shakspeare, Richard, and Thomas. Judith was about thirty-one years old at the time of her marriage; and, living just forty-six years afterwards, she

[1] "I have heard that Mr. Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all. Hee frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year; and for itt had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of 1000*l.* a-year, as I have heard. Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson, had a merie meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." (Diary of the Rev. John Ward, A.M., Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon, extending from 1648 to 1679, p. 183. Lond. 1839, 8vo.)

[2] It is naturally to be supposed that Dr. Hall would attend the sick-bed of his father-in-law; and the discovery of this gentleman's medical diary promised some gratification to our curiosity as to the cause of Shakspeare's death. Unfortunately, it does not commence until the year 1617.

died in February 1662, at the age of seventy-seven. Her three sons died without issue; and thus, in the direct lineal descent, it is certain that no representative has survived of this transcendent poet, the most august amongst created intellects.

After this review of Shakspeare's life, it becomes our duty to take a summary survey of his works, of his intellectual powers, and of his station in literature,—a station which is now irrevocably settled, not so much (which happens in other cases) by a vast overbalance of favourable suffrages, as by acclamation; not so much by the *voices* of those who admire him up to the verge of idolatry, as by the *acts* of those who everywhere seek for his works among the primal necessities of life, demand them, and crave them as they do their daily bread; not so much by eulogy openly proclaiming itself, as by the silent homage recorded in the endless multiplication of what he has bequeathed us; not so much by his own compatriots, who, with regard to almost every other author,[1] compose the total amount of his *effective* audience, as by the unanimous "All hail!" of intellectual Christendom; finally, not by the hasty partisanship of his own generation, nor by the biassed judgment of an age trained in the same modes of feeling and of thinking with himself, but by the solemn award of generation succeeding to generation, of one age correcting the obliquities or peculiarities of another; by the verdict of two hundred and thirty years, which have now elapsed since the very *latest* of his creations, or of two hundred and forty-seven years if we date from the earliest; a verdict which has been continually revived and re-opened, probed, searched, vexed, by criticism in every spirit, from the most

[1] An exception ought perhaps to be made for Sir Walter Scott and for Cervantes; but with regard to all other writers,—Dante, suppose, or Ariosto amongst Italians, Camoens amongst those of Portugal, Schiller amongst Germans,—however ably they may have been naturalised in foreign languages, as all of those here mentioned (excepting only Ariosto) have in one part of their works been most powerfully naturalised in English, it still remains true (and the very sale of the books is proof sufficient) that an alien author never does take root in the general sympathies out of his own country. He takes his station in libraries, he is read by the man of learned leisure, he is known and valued by the refined and the elegant; but he is not (what Shakspeare is for Germany and America) in any proper sense a *popular* favourite.

genial and intelligent, down to the most malignant and scurrilously hostile which feeble heads and great ignorance could suggest when co-operating with impure hearts and narrow sensibilities; a verdict, in short, sustained and countersigned by a longer series of writers, many of them eminent for wit or learning, than were ever before congregated upon any inquest relating to any author, be he who he might, ancient[1] or modern, Pagan or Christian. It was a most witty saying with respect to a piratical and knavish publisher, who made a trade of insulting the memories of deceased authors by forged writings, that he was "among the new terrors of death." But in the gravest sense it may be affirmed of Shakspeare that he is among the modern luxuries of life; that life, in fact, is a new thing, and one more to be coveted, since Shakspeare has extended the domains of human consciousness, and pushed its dark frontiers into regions not so much as dimly descried or even suspected before his time, far less illuminated (as now they are) by beauty and tropical luxuriance of life. For instance,—a single instance, indeed one which in itself is a world of new revelation,—the possible beauty of the female character had not been seen as in a dream before Shakspeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogen, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others. The Una of Spenser, earlier by ten or fifteen years than most of these, was an idealised portrait of female innocence and virgin purity, but too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality. And, as to the Grecian classics, let not the reader imagine for an instant that any prototype in this field of Shakspearian power can be looked for there. The *Antigone* and the *Electra* of the tragic poets are the two leading female characters that classical antiquity offers to our respect, but assuredly not to our impassioned love, as disciplined and exalted in the school of Shakspeare. They challenge our admiration, severe, and even stern, as impersonations of filial duty, cleaving to the steps of a desolate and afflicted old man, or of sisterly affection, maintaining the rights of a brother

[1] It will occur to many readers that perhaps Homer may furnish the sole exception to this sweeping assertion. [See De Quincey's appended note.—M.]

under circumstances of peril, of desertion, and consequently of perfect self-reliance. Iphigenia, again, though not dramatically coming before us in her own person, but according to the beautiful report of a spectator, presents us with a fine statuesque model of heroic fortitude, and of one whose young heart, even in the very agonies of her cruel immolation, refused to forget, by a single indecorous gesture, or so much as a moment's neglect of her own princely descent, that she herself was "a lady in the land." These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakspeare; there is "no speculation" in their cold marble eyes; the breath of life is not in their nostrils; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And, besides this immeasurable difference between the cold moony reflexes of life as exhibited by the power of Grecian art and the true sunny life of Shakspeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, &c., of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom: this solitary feature is presented to us as an abstraction, and as an insulated quality; whereas in Shakspeare all is presented in the *concrete*,—that is to say, not brought forward in relief, as by some effort of an anatomical artist, but embodied and imbedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature, in the complex system of a human life: a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and, with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and re-acting each upon the other—nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakspeare's characters is felt for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations.

The Greek poets could not exhibit any approximations to *female* character without violating the truth of Grecian life and shocking the feelings of the audience. The drama with the Greeks, as with us, though much less than with us, was a picture of human life; and that which could not occur in life could not wisely be exhibited on the stage. Now, in ancient Greece, women were secluded from the society of men. The conventual sequestration of the *γυναικωνίτις* or

female apartment[1] of the house, and the Mahommedan consecration of its threshold against the ingress of males, had been transplanted from Asia into Greece thousands of years perhaps before either convents or Mahommed existed. Thus barred from all open social intercourse, women could not develop or express any character by word or action. Even to *have* a character, violated, to a Grecian mind, the ideal portrait of feminine excellence; whence, perhaps, partly the too generic, too little individualized, style of Grecian beauty. But prominently to *express* a character was impossible under the common tenor of Grecian life, unless when high tragical catastrophes transcended the decorums of that tenor, or for a brief interval raised the curtain which veiled it. Hence the subordinate part which women play upon the Greek stage in all but some half-dozen cases. In the paramount tragedy on that stage, the model tragedy, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, there is virtually no woman at all; for Jocasta is a party to the story merely as the dead Laius or the self-murdered Sphinx was a party,—viz. by her contributions to the fatalities of the event, not by anything she does or says spontaneously. In fact, the Greek poet, if a wise poet, could not address himself genially to a task in which he must begin by shocking the sensibilities of his countrymen. And hence followed, not only the dearth of female characters in the Grecian drama, but also a second result still more favourable to the sense of a new power evolved by Shakspeare. Whenever the common law of Grecian life did give way, it was, as we have observed, to the suspending force of some great convulsion or tragical catastrophe. This for a moment (like an earthquake in a nunnery) would set at liberty even the timid, fluttering Grecian women, those doves of the dove-cot, and would call some of them into action. But which? Precisely those of energetic and masculine minds; the timid and feminine would but shrink the more from public gaze and from

[1] *Apartment* is here used, as the reader will observe, in its true and continental acceptation, as a division or *compartment* of a house including many rooms: a suite of chambers, but a suite which is partitioned off (as in palaces); not a single chamber,—a sense so commonly and so erroneously given to this word in England.

tumult. Thus it happened that such female characters as *were* exhibited in Greece could not but be the harsh and the severe. If a gentle Ismene appeared for a moment in contest with some energetic sister Antigone (and chiefly, perhaps, by way of drawing out the fiercer character of that sister), she was soon dismissed as unfit for scenical effect. So that not only were female characters few, but, moreover, of these few the majority were but repetitions of masculine qualities in female persons. Female agency being seldom summoned on the stage except when it had received a sort of special dispensation from its sexual character by some terrific convulsions of the house or the city, naturally it assumed the style of action suited to these circumstances. And hence it arose that not woman as she differed from man, but woman as she resembled man—woman, in short, seen under circumstances so dreadful as to abolish the effect of sexual distinction—was the woman of the Greek tragedy.[1] And hence generally arose for Shakspeare the wider field, and the more astonishing by its perfect novelty, when he first introduced female characters, not as mere varieties or echoes of masculine characters, a Medea or Clytemnestra, or a vindictive Hecuba, the mere tigress of the tragic tiger, but female characters that had the appropriate beauty of female nature; woman no longer grand, terrific, and repulsive, but woman "after her kind"—the other hemisphere of the dramatic world; woman running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness; woman as emancipated, exalted, ennobled, under a new law of Christian morality; woman the sister and coequal of man, no longer his slave, his prisoner, and sometimes his rebel. "It is a far cry to Loch Awe"; and from the Athenian stage to the stage of Shakspeare, it may be said, is a prodigious interval. True; but, prodigious as it is, there is really nothing between them. The Roman stage, at least the tragic stage, as is well known, was put out, as

[1] And hence, by parity of reason, under the opposite circumstances, under the circumstances which, instead of abolishing, most emphatically drew forth the sexual distinctions, viz. in the *comic* aspects of social intercourse, the reason that we see no women on the Greek stage. The Greek comedy, unless when it affects the extravagant fun of farce, rejects women.

by an extinguisher, by the cruel amphitheatre, just as a candle is made pale and ridiculous by daylight. Those who were fresh from the real murders of the bloody amphitheatre regarded with contempt the mimic murders of the stage. Stimulation too coarse and too intense had its usual effect in making the sensibilities callous. Christian emperors arose at length, who abolished the amphitheatre in its bloodier features. But by that time the genius of the tragic muse had long slept the sleep of death. And that muse had no resurrection until the age of Shakspeare. So that, notwithstanding a gulf of nineteen centuries and upwards separates Shakspeare from Euripides, the last of the surviving Greek tragedians, the one is still the nearest successor of the other, just as Connaught and the islands in Clew Bay are next neighbours to America, although three thousand watery columns, each of a cubic mile in dimensions, divide them from each other.

A second reason which lends an emphasis of novelty and effective power to Shakspeare's female world is a peculiar fact of contrast which exists between that and his corresponding world of men. Let us explain. The purpose and the intention of the Grecian stage was not primarily to develop human *character*, whether in men or in women: human *fates* were its object; great tragic situations under the mighty control of a vast cloudy destiny, dimly descried at intervals, and brooding over human life by mysterious agencies, and for mysterious ends. Man, no longer the representative of an august *will*,—man, the passion-puppet of fate,—could not with any effect display what we call a character, which is a distinction between man and man, emanating originally from the will, and expressing its determinations, moving under the large variety of human impulses. The will is the central pivot of character; and this was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled, by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. That explanation will sufficiently clear up the reason why marked or complex variety of character was slighted by the great principles of the Greek tragedy. And every scholar who has studied that grand drama of Greece with feeling,—that drama, so magnificent, so regal, so stately,—and who has thoughtfully investigated

its principles, and its difference from the English drama, will acknowledge that powerful and elaborate character,—character, for instance, that could employ the fiftieth part of that profound analysis which has been applied to Hamlet, to Falstaff, to Lear, to Othello, and applied by Mrs. Jameson so admirably to the full development of the Shakspearian heroines,—would have been as much wasted, nay, would have been defeated, and interrupted the blind agencies of fate, just in the same way as it would injure the shadowy grandeur of a ghost to invidualize it too much. Milton's angels are slightly touched, superficially touched, with differences of character; but they are such differences, so simple and general, as are just sufficient to rescue them from the reproach applied to Virgil's "*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem*"; just sufficient to make them knowable apart. Pliny speaks of painters who painted in one or two colours; and, as respects the angelic characters, Milton does so; he is *monochromatic.* So, and for reasons resting upon the same ultimate philosophy, were the mighty architects of the Greek tragedy. They also were monochromatic; they also, as to the characters of their persons, painted in one colour. And so far there might have been the same novelty in Shakspeare's men as in his women. There *might* have been; but the reason why there is *not* must be sought in the fact that History, the muse of History, had there even been no such muse as Melpomene, would have forced us into an acquaintance with human character. History, as the representative of actual life, of real man, gives us powerful delineations of character in its chief agents,—that is, in men; and therefore it is that Shakspeare, the absolute creator of female character, was but the mightiest of all painters with regard to male character. Take a single instance. The Antony of Shakspeare, immortal for its execution, is found, after all, as regards the primary conception, in history: Shakspeare's delineation is but the expansion of the germ already preexisting, by way of scattered fragments, in Cicero's Philippics, in Cicero's Letters, in Appian, &c. But Cleopatra, equally fine, is a pure creation of art: the situation and the scenic circumstances belong to history, but the character belongs to Shakspeare.

In the great world, therefore, of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another: for reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian,[1] no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs to the Christian mind: and in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, but Shakspeare, has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth "the majesty of buried Denmark," how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject of apparitions; are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion); its starting "as a guilty thing" placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance, yet clothed in palpable armour; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language,

[1] It may be thought, however, by some readers, that Æschylus, in his fine phantom of Darius, has approached the English ghost. As a foreign ghost, we would wish (and we are sure that our excellent readers would wish) to show every courtesy and attention to this apparition of Darius. It has the advantage of being royal, an advantage which it shares with the ghost of the royal Dane. Yet how different, how removed by a total world, from that or any of Shakspeare's ghosts! Take that of Banquo, for instance: how shadowy, how unreal, yet how real! Darius is a mere ghost—a diplomatic ghost. But Banquo—he exists only for Macbeth: the guests do not see him; yet how solemn, how real, how heart-searching he is!

and the appropriate scenery of its haunt, viz. the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night,—what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapour, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the *Tempest*, again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion. Ariel in antithesis to Caliban![1] What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sunlights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, "the fleshliest incubus" among the fiends, and yet so far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy! In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakspeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede: they are like—"like, but oh, how different!" And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself, and taken separately from its connexion, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in Macbeth are another variety of supernatural life in which Shakspeare's power to enchant and to disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish Sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in Hamlet. There we see the *positive* of Shakspeare's superior power. But now turn and look to the *negative*. At a time when the trials of witches, the royal book on demonology,[2] and popular

[1] Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakspeare's great creations are like works of nature, subjects of unexhaustible study. [See De Quincey's appended note.—M.]

[2] The *Dæmonologie* of James VI of Scotland, first printed at Edin-

superstition (all so far useful, as they prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies) had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakspeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy (a tragedy moreover which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Grecian model); he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day,—that, although potent over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable; yet, relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

A third fund of Shakspeare's peculiar power lies in his teeming fertility of fine thoughts and sentiments. From his works alone might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts the deepest, subtlest, most pathetic, and yet most catholic and universally intelligible; the most characteristic, also, and appropriate to the particular person, the situation, and the case, yet, at the same time, applicable to the circumstances of every human being, under all the accidents of life, and all vicissitudes of fortune. But this subject offers so vast a field of observation, it being so eminently the prerogative of Shakspeare to have thought more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined, that we cannot wrong the dignity of such a theme by doing more, in our narrow limits, than simply noticing it as one of the emblazonries upon Shakspeare's shield.

Fourthly, we shall indicate (and, as in the last case, *barely* indicate, without attempting in so vast a field to offer any in-

burgh 1597, reprinted there 1600, and reprinted in London 1603, when he was James I. of England.—M.

adequate illustrations) one mode of Shakspeare's dramatic excellence which hitherto has not attracted any special or separate notice. We allude to the forms of life and natural human passion as apparent in the structure of his dialogue. Among the many defects and infirmities of the French and of the Italian drama, indeed we may say of the Greek, the dialogue proceeds always by independent speeches, replying indeed to each other, but never modified in its several openings by the momentary effect of its several terminal forms immediately preceding. Now, in Shakspeare, who first set an example of that most important innovation, in all his impassioned dialogues, each reply or rejoinder seems the mere rebound of the previous speech. Every form of natural interruption, breaking through the restraints of ceremony under the impulses of tempestuous passion; every form of hasty interrogative, ardent reiteration when a question has been evaded; every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement; in short, all modes and formulæ by which anger, hurry, fretfulness, scorn, impatience, or excitement under any movement whatever, can disturb or modify or dislocate the formal bookish style of commencement: these are as rife in Shakspeare's dialogue as in life itself; and how much vivacity, how profound a verisimilitude, they add to the scenic effect as an imitation of human passion and real life, we need not say. A volume might be written illustrating the vast varieties of Shakspeare's art and power in this one field of improvement; another volume might be dedicated to the exposure of the lifeless and unnatural result from the opposite practice in the foreign stages of France and Italy. And we may truly say that, were Shakspeare distinguished from them by this single feature of nature and propriety, he would on that account alone have merited a great immortality.

APPENDED NOTES

THE NAME SHAKSPEARE.—Page 17.

MR. CAMPBELL, the latest editor of Shakspeare's dramatic works, observes that the "poet's name has been variously written Shaxpeare, Shackspeare, Shakspeare, and Shakspere"; to which varieties might be added Shagspere, from the Worcester Marriage License, published in 1836. But the fact is that, by combining with all the differences in spelling the first syllable all those in spelling the second, more than twenty-five distinct varieties of the name may be expanded (like an algebraic series), for the choice of the curious in mis-spelling. Above all things, those varieties which arise from the intercalation of the middle *e* (that is, the *e* immediately before the final syllable *spear*) can never be overlooked by those who remember, at the opening of The Dunciad, the note upon this very question about the orthography of Shakspeare's name, as also upon the other great question about the title of the immortal Satire,—whether it ought not to have been The Dunceiade, seeing that Dunce, its great author and progenitor, cannot possibly dispense with the letter *e*. Meantime we must remark that the first three of Mr. Campbell's variations are mere caprices of the press; as is Shagspere; or, more probably, this last euphonious variety arose out of the gross clownish pronunciation of the two hiccuping "*marksmen*" who rode over to Worcester for the license: and one cannot forbear laughing at the bishop's secretary for having been so misled by two varlets, professedly incapable of signing their own names. The same drunken villains had cut down the bride's name *Hathaway* into *Hathwey*. Finally, to treat the matter with seriousness, Sir Frederick Madden has shown, in his recent letter to the Society of Antiquaries, that the poet himself in all probability wrote the name uniformly *Shakspere*. Orthography, both of proper names, of appellatives, and of words universally, was very unsettled up to a period long subsequent to that of Shakspeare. Still, it must usually have happened that names written variously and laxly by others would be written uniformly by the owners; especially by those owners who had occasion to sign their names frequently, and by literary people, whose attention was often, as well as consciously, directed to the proprieties of spelling. *Shakspeare* is now too familiar to the eye

for any alteration to be attempted ; but it is pretty certain that Sir Frederick Madden is right in stating the poet's own signature to have been uniformly *Shakspere.* It is so written twice in the course of his will, and it is so written on a blank leaf of Florio's English translation of Montaigne's Essays ; a book recently discovered, and sold, on account of its autograph, for a hundred guineas.—[The controversy as to which of the many old spellings of the name *Shakespeare* ought to be preferred seems now to have narrowed itself finally into the single question between the short form *Shakspere* and the full form *Shakespeare.* The reason for *Shakspere,* here stated by De Quincey, has influenced some ; but it seems to be overwhelmed by the reasons for *Shakespeare.* This was the poet's own spelling in the signatures of his name to the dedications of his first printed pieces,—the *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, and the *Lucrece* in 1594,—to the Earl of Southampton ; it is the almost uniform spelling of his name on the title-pages to the long series of his plays, &c., published in his lifetime (the hyphened variation *Shake-speare* occurring sometimes, but never the form *Shakspere)* ; it is the spelling used by the editors of the first folio ; it is far more graceful in itself than *Shakspere ;* and it conveys better what was undoubtedly the *sound* of the poet's name among his educated contemporaries,—the final *e* remaining as a pleasant touch of the antique. These reasons have been conclusive with the best recent authorities,—such as Mr. Halliwell Phillipps and the editors of the Cambridge Shakespeare. De Quincey (who had not weighed the evidence well) is not uniform in his own spelling. Although in his present paper he favours *Shakspeare* (common a little while ago, but now properly discarded by all who do not argue for the Scottish pronunciation of the *Shak*), in other papers he has *Shakspere.* I am surprised that his usual good taste in such matters did not lead him to *Shakespeare,* and to the advocacy of that form.—M.]

Shakspeare's Reputation.—Page 31.

The necessity of compression obliges us to omit many arguments and references by which we could demonstrate the fact that Shakspeare's reputation was always in a progressive state ; allowing only for the interruption of about seventeen years which this poet, in common with all others, sustained, not so much from the state of war (which did not fully occupy four of those years) as from the triumph of a gloomy fanaticism. Deduct the twenty-three years of the seventeenth century which had elapsed before the first folio appeared ; to this space add seventeen years of fanatical madness, during fourteen of which *all* dramatic entertainments were suppressed : the remainder is sixty years. And surely the sale of four editions of a vast folio in that space of time was an expression of an abiding interest. *No other poet, except Spenser, continued to sell throughout the century.* Besides, in arguing the case of a *dramatic* poet, we must bear in mind that, although readers of learned books might be diffused over the face of the land, the readers of poetry would be chiefly concentrated in the

metropolis, and such persons would have no need to buy what they heard at the theatres. But then comes the question whether Shakspeare kept possession of the theatres. And we are really humiliated by the gross want of sense which has been shown, by Malone chiefly, but also by many others, in discussing this question. From the Restoration to 1682, says Malone, no more than four plays of Shakspeare's were performed by a principal company in London "Such was the lamentable taste of those times that the plays of Fletcher, Jonson, and Shirley, were much oftener exhibited than those of our author." What cant is this! If that taste were "lamentable," what are we to think of our own times, when plays a thousand times below those of Fletcher, or even of Shirley, continually displace Shakspeare? Shakspeare would himself have exulted in finding that he gave way only to dramatists so excellent. And, as we have before observed, both then and now, it is the very familiarity with Shakspeare which often banishes him from audiences honestly in quest of relaxation and amusement. Novelty is the very soul of such relaxation; but in our closets, when we are *not* unbending, when our minds are in a state of tension from intellectual cravings, then it is that we resort to Shakspeare; and oftentimes those who honour him most, like ourselves, are the most impatient of seeing his divine scenes disfigured by unequal representation (good, perhaps, in a single personation, bad in all the rest); or to hear his divine thoughts mangled in the recitation; or (which is worst of all) to hear them dishonoured and defeated by imperfect apprehension in the audience, or by defective sympathy. Meantime, if one theatre played only four of Shakspeare's dramas, another played at least seven. But the grossest folly of Malone is in fancying the numerous alterations so many insults to Shakspeare, whereas they expressed as much homage to his memory as if the unaltered dramas had been retained. The substance *was* retained. The changes were merely concessions to the changing views of scenical propriety; sometimes, no doubt, made with a simple view to the revolution effected by Davenant at the Restoration, in bringing *scenes* (in the painter's sense) upon the stage; sometimes also with a view to the altered fashions of the audience during the suspensions of the action, or perhaps to the introduction of *after-pieces*, by which, of course, the time was abridged for the main performance. A volume might be written upon this subject. Meantime let us never be told that a poet was losing, or had lost, his ground, who found in his lowest depression amongst his almost idolatrous supporters a great king distracted by civil wars, a mighty republican poet distracted by puritanical fanaticism, the greatest successor by far of that great poet, a papist and a bigoted royalist, and, finally, the leading actor of the century, who gave and reflected the ruling impulses of his age.

VALUE OF ASBIES.—Page 41.

After all the assistance given to such equations between different times or different places by Sir George Shuckborough's tables, and

other similar investigations, it is still a very difficult problem,—complex, and, after all, merely tentative in the results,—to assign the true value in such cases; not only for the obvious reason that the powers of money have varied in different directions with regard to different objects, and in different degrees where the direction has on the whole continued the same, but because the very objects to be taken into computation are so indeterminate, and vary so much, not only as regards century and century, kingdom and kingdom, but also, even in the same century and the same kingdom, as regards rank and rank. That which is a mere necessary to one is a luxurious superfluity to another. And, in order to ascertain these differences, it is an indispensable qualification to have studied the habits and customs of the several classes concerned, together with the variations of those habits and customs.

REGARD FOR WOMANHOOD IN ENGLAND.—Page 48.

Never was the *esse quam videri* in any point more strongly discriminated than in this very point of gallantry to the female sex, as between England and France. In France, the verbal homage to woman is so excessive as to betray its real purpose,—viz. that it is a mask for secret contempt. In England, little is *said;* but, in the meantime, we allow our sovereign ruler to be a woman; which in France is impossible. Even that fact is of some importance, but less so than what follows. In every country whatsoever, if any principle has a deep root in the moral feelings of the people, we may rely upon its showing itself, by a thousand evidences, amongst the very lowest ranks, and in their daily intercourse and their *undress* manners. Now, in England there is, and always has been, a manly feeling, most widely diffused, of unwillingness to see labours of a coarse order, or requiring muscular exertions, thrown upon women. Pauperism, amongst other evil effects, has sometimes locally disturbed this predominating sentiment of Englishmen; but never at any time with such depth as to kill the root of the old hereditary manliness. Sometimes at this day a gentleman, either from carelessness, or from over-ruling force of convenience, or from real defect of gallantry, will allow a female servant to carry his portmanteau for him; though, after all, that spectacle is a rare one. And everywhere women of all ages engage in the pleasant, nay elegant, labours of the hay field; but in Great Britain women are never suffered to mow, which is a most athletic and exhausting labour, nor to load a cart, nor to drive a plough or hold it. In France, on the other hand, before the Revolution (at which period the pseudo-homage, the lip-honour, was far more ostentatiously professed towards the female sex than at present), a Frenchman of credit, and vouching for his statement by the whole weight of his name and personal responsibility (M. Simond, now an American citizen), records the following abominable scene as one of no uncommon occurrence:—A woman was in some provinces yoked side by side with an ass to the plough or the harrow. And M. Simond protests that it excited no horror to see the driver distributing his lashes impartially between the

woman and her brute yoke-fellow. So much for the wordy pomps of French gallantry. In England, we trust, and we believe, that any man caught in such a situation, and in such an abuse of his power (supposing the case otherwise a possible one), would be killed on the spot.

Slander of Corporal Punishment.—Page 58.

In a little memoir of Milton which the author of this article drew up some years ago for a public society, and which is printed in an abridged shape,[1] he took occasion to remark that Dr. Johnson, who was meanly anxious to revive the slander against Milton, as well as some others, had supposed Milton himself to have this flagellation in his mind, and indirectly to confess it, in one of his Latin poems, where, speaking of Cambridge, and declaring that he had no longer any pleasure in the thoughts of revisiting that university, he says,—

> "Nec duri libet usque minas perferre magistri,
> Cæteraque ingenio non subeunda meo."

This last line the malicious critic would translate—"And other things insufferable to a man of my temper." But, as we then observed, *ingenium* is properly expressive of the *intellectual* constitution, whilst it is the *moral* constitution that suffers degradation from personal chastisement—the sense of honour, of personal dignity, of justice, &c. *Indoles* is the proper term for this latter idea; and, in using the word *ingenium*, there cannot be a doubt that Milton alluded to the dry scholastic disputations, which were shocking and odious to his fine poetical genius. If, therefore, the vile story is still to be kept up in order to dishonour a great man, at any rate let it not in future be pretended that any countenance to such a slander can be drawn from the confessions of the poet himself.

Shakspeare's Station in Literature.—Page 70.

It will occur to many readers that perhaps Homer may furnish the sole exception to this sweeping assertion. Any *but* Homer is clearly and ludicrously below the level of the competition; but even Homer, "with his tail on" (as the Scottish Highlanders say of their chieftains when belted by their ceremonial retinues), musters nothing like the force which *already* follows Shakspeare; and be it remembered that Homer sleeps, and has long slept, as a subject of criticism or commentary, while in Germany as well as England, and *now even in France*, the gathering of wits to the vast equipage of Shakspeare is advancing in an accelerated ratio. There is, in fact, a great delusion current upon this subject. Innumerable references to Homer, and brief critical remarks on this or that pretension of Homer, this or that

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[1] In the present volume, pp. 86-102.—M.

scene, this or that passage, lie scattered over literature ancient and modern; but the express works dedicated to the separate service of Homer are, after all, not many. In Greek we have only the large Commentary of Eustathius, and the Scholia of Didymus, &c.; in French little or nothing before the prose translation of the seventeenth century which Pope esteemed "elegant," and the skirmishings of Madame Dacier, La Motte, &c.; in English, besides the various translations and their prefaces (which, by the way, began as early as 1555), nothing of much importance until the elaborate preface of Pope to the Iliad and his elaborate postscript to the Odyssey,—nothing certainly before that, and very little indeed since that except Wood's Essay on the Life and Genius of Homer. On the other hand, of the books written in illustration or investigation of Shakspeare, a very considerable library might be formed in England, and another in Germany.

CALIBAN.—Page 77.

Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakspeare's great creations are, like works of nature, subject of inexhaustible study. It was this character of whom Charles I. and some of his ministers expressed such fervent admiration; and, among other circumstances, most justly they admired the new language almost with which he is endowed for the purpose of expressing his fiendish and yet carnal thoughts of hatred to his master. Caliban is evidently not meant for scorn, but for abomination mixed with fear and partial respect. He is purposely brought into contrast with the drunken Trinculo and Stephano, with an advantageous result. He is much more intellectual than either,—uses a more elevated language, not disfigured by vulgarisms, and is not liable to the low passion for plunder, as they are. He is mortal, doubtless, as his "dam" (for Shakspeare will not call her mother) Sycorax. But he inherits from her such qualities of power as a witch could be supposed to bequeath. He trembles indeed before Prospero; but that is, as we are to understand, through the moral superiority of Prospero in Christian wisdom; for, when he finds himself in the presence of dissolute and unprincipled men, he rises at once into the dignity of intellectual power.

LIFE OF MILTON[1]

THAT sanctity which settles on the memory of a great man ought, upon a double motive, to be vigilantly sustained by his countrymen: first, out of gratitude to him as one column of the national grandeur; secondly, with a practical purpose of transmitting unimpaired to posterity the benefit of ennobling models. High standards of excellence are among the happiest distinctions by which the modern ages of the world have an advantage over earlier; and we are all interested, by duty as well as policy, in preserving them inviolate. To the benefit of this principle none amongst the great men of England is better entitled than Milton, whether as respects his transcendent merit or the harshness with which his memory has been treated.

John Milton was born in London on the 9th day of December 1608. His father, in early life, had suffered for conscience' sake, having been disinherited upon his abjuring the Popish faith. He pursued the laborious profession of a

[1] After some search, I have identified this sketch with an anonymous article on Milton which had appeared in a miscellany of short popular biographies, in four volumes, with the title *Distinguished Men of Modern Times,* issued in London in 1838 by Charles Knight, as one of the publications of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. De Quincey, on reprinting it thence in 1859, as part of vol. xi. of his Collected Writings, made hardly any change in the text, but added footnotes,—of which there were none in the original. The sketch, though inaccurate in some particulars, and too slight for its subject, shows a real familiarity with the materials for Milton's life.—M.

scrivener, and, having realized an ample fortune, retired into the country to enjoy it. Educated at Oxford, he gave his son the best education that the age afforded. At first, young Milton had the benefit of a private tutor: from him he was removed to St. Paul's School; next he proceeded to Christ's College, Cambridge; and finally, after several years' preparation by extensive reading, he pursued a course of continental travel. It is to be observed that his tutor, Thomas Young, was a Puritan; and there is reason to believe that Puritan politics prevailed among the fellows of his college. This must not be forgotten in speculating on Milton's public life and his inexorable hostility to the established government in Church and State; for it will thus appear probable that he was at no time withdrawn from the influence of Puritan connexions.

In 1632, having taken the degree of M.A., Milton finally quitted the University, leaving behind him a very brilliant reputation, and a general good-will in his own college. His father had now retired from London, and lived upon his own estate at Horton in Buckinghamshire. In this rural solitude Milton passed the next five years, resorting to London only at rare intervals, for the purchase of books or music. His time was chiefly occupied with the study of Greek and Roman, and no doubt also of Italian, literature. But that he was not negligent of composition, and that he applied himself with great zeal to the culture of his native literature, we have a splendid record in his "Comus," which, upon the strongest presumptions, is ascribed to this period of his life. In the same neighbourhood, and within the same five years, it is believed that he produced also the "Arcades" and the "Lycidas," together with "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."[1]

In 1637 Milton's mother died, and in the following year he commenced his travels. The state of Europe confined his choice of ground to France and Italy. The former excited in him but little interest. After a short stay at Paris he pursued the direct route to Nice, where he embarked for

[1] The dates of the Horton poems here mentioned by De Quincey are these:—*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* in 1632, *Arcades* in 1633, *Comus* in 1634, *Lycidas* in 1637.—M.

Genoa, and thence proceeded to Pisa, Florence, Rome, and Naples. He originally meant to extend his tour to Sicily and Greece; but the news of the first Scotch War, having now reached him, agitated his mind with too much patriotic sympathy to allow of his embarking on a scheme of such uncertain duration.[1] Yet his homeward movements were not remarkable for expedition. He had already spent two months in Florence and as many in Rome; but he devoted the same space of time to each of them on his return. From Florence he proceeded to Lucca, and thence, by Bologna and Ferrara, to Venice, where he remained one month, and then pursued his homeward route through Verona, Milan, and Geneva.

Sir Henry Wotton had recommended as the rule of his conduct a celebrated Italian proverb, inculcating the policy of reserve and dissimulation.[2] And so far did this old fox carry his refinements of cunning that even the dissimulation was to be dissembled. *I pensieri stretti*, the thoughts being under the closest restraint, nevertheless *il viso sciolto*, the countenance was to be open as the day. From a practised diplomatist this advice was characteristic; but it did not suit the frankness of Milton's manners, nor the nobleness of his mind. He has himself stated to us his own rule of conduct; which was to move no questions of controversy, yet not to evade them when pressed upon him by others. Upon this principle he acted, not without some offence to his associates, nor wholly without danger to himself. But the offence, doubtless, was blended with respect; the danger was passed; and he returned home with all his purposes fulfilled. He had conversed with Galileo; he had seen whatever was most interesting in the monuments of Roman grandeur or the triumphs of Italian art; and he could report with truth

[1] This war, which was in 1639, was the "First Bishops' War," so called because it was undertaken by Charles I. for the purpose of reimposing upon the Scots that episcopal church-system which they had repudiated and thrown off in the previous year.—M.

[2] The reference is to the kindly letter of advice sent to Milton, just before his continental journey, by Sir Henry Wotton, Provost of Eton. "*I pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto*" ("thoughts close, countenance open") had been the old ex-ambassador's counsel to the young traveller for his behaviour among the Italians.—M.

that, in spite of his religion, everywhere undissembled, he had been honoured by the attentions of the great and by the compliments of the learned.

After fifteen months of absence, Milton found himself again in London at a crisis of unusual interest. The king was on the eve of his second expedition against the Scotch; and we may suppose Milton to have been watching the course of events with profound anxiety, not without some anticipation of the patriotic labour which awaited him. Meantime he occupied himself with the education of his sister's two sons, and soon after, by way of obtaining an honourable maintenance, increased the number of his pupils.

Dr. Johnson, himself at one period of his life a schoolmaster, on this occasion indulges in a sneer and a false charge too injurious to be neglected. "Let not our veneration for Milton," says he, "forbid us to look with some degree of merriment on great promises and small performance: on the man who hastens home because his countrymen are contending for their liberty, and, when he reaches the scene of action, vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding-school." It is not true that Milton had made "great promises," or any promises at all. But, if he had made the greatest, his exertions for the next sixteen years nobly redeemed them. In what way did Dr. Johnson expect that his patriotism should be expressed? As a soldier? Milton has himself urged his bodily weakness and intellectual strength as reasons for following a line of duty ten thousand times nobler. Was he influenced in his choice by fear of military dangers or hardships? Far from it. "For I did not," he says, "shun those evils without engaging to render to my fellow-citizens services much more useful, and attended with no less of danger." What services were those? We will state them in his own words, anticipated from an after period. "When I observed that there are in all three "modes of liberty—first, ecclesiastical liberty, secondly, civil "liberty, thirdly, domestic: having myself already treated "of the first, and noticing that the magistrate was taking "steps in behalf of the second, I concluded that the third, "that is to say, domestic, or household liberty, remained to

"me as my peculiar province. And, whereas this again is
"capable of a threefold subdivision, accordingly as it regards
"the interests of conjugal life in the first place, or those of
"education in the second, or finally the freedom of speech and
"the right of giving full publication to sound opinions,—I took
"it upon myself to defend all three: the first, by my 'Doctrine
"and Discipline of Divorce'; the second, by my Tractate
"upon Education; the third, by my 'Areopagitica.'"[1]

In 1641, he conducted his defence of ecclesiastical liberty in a series of attacks upon Episcopacy. These are written in a spirit of rancorous hostility, for which we find no sufficient apology in Milton's too exclusive converse with a faction of bishop-haters, or even in the alleged low condition of the episcopal bench at that particular era.[2]

At Whitsuntide, in the year 1645, having reached his 35th year, Milton married Mary Powell,[3] a young lady of

[1] Translated, in an abridged form, from Milton's Latin in an autobiographic passage of his *Defensio Secunda*, published in 1654.—M.

[2] It was bad policy in logic to urge at that time the intellectual deficiencies (true or false) of the individual bishops, because this dilemma instantly arose:—These personal deficiencies in the bishops had, or had not, caused the prevailing ecclesiastical grievances. If they had *not*, then it was confessedly impertinence to notice them at all. On the other hand, if they *had*, then, in whatsoever proportion they were responsible for the alleged grievances connected with the Church, in that proportion they exonerated the institution of Episcopacy from any share in producing those grievances. Such grievances could not be chargeable upon the personal insufficiency of the individual bishop, and yet at the same time separately chargeable upon the original vice of Episcopacy.

[3] "*Mary Powell*":—We have seen in the hands of young ladies a romance bearing this title, which (whether meant or not to injure Milton) must do so if applied to the real facts of the case. Novels professedly historical may, in some rare instances, have illuminated and vivified history; much oftener they have perplexed it, and, like the famous *Recess* of Miss Sophia Lee, some seventy years back, starting from the basis of a marriage between our English Duke of Norfolk and our Scottish Queen Mary, have utterly falsified both the facts and the traditions of the case. But, when applied to the facts or the traditions of Biography, such romantic fictions have a far more calumnious tendency. Every step which is made towards the whitewashing of the frivolous and unprincipled Mary Powell is a step towards the impeachment of Milton,—and impeachment in a case which, if any within the records of human experience, drew forth and emblazoned Milton's benign spirit of forgiveness, and his magnani-

good extraction, in the county of Oxford. One month after he allowed his wife to visit her family. This permission, in itself somewhat singular, the lady abused; for, when sum-

mous forbearance when a triumph was offered at once to his partisanship as a politician and to his insulted rights as a husband. Look back, reader, for a few lines, and fix your attention upon the particular date of Milton's marriage. There is something very significant and important in *that*. It was celebrated, as you see, at Whitsuntide in the year 1645. Now, as Whitsuntide is a movable festival, and dependent upon Easter, it is difficult to guess on what day it would fall in that year. But, at the very earliest, Whitsuntide would fall in May, and, at the latest, within the month of June. Now, in that very June was fought and won by the Parliament forces under Fairfax the decisive battle of Naseby in Northamptonshire. That battle prostrated the party to which the Powells belonged, and raised to the supreme administration of public affairs the party of Milton, and eventually Milton himself. It is true that a lingering resistance to the Parliament was kept up in garrisoned and fortified towns throughout the nine months succeeding to Naseby. But about Lady-day [March 25] of the following year, 1646, the very last act of hostility took place, viz. an extensive cavalry action at Stow-in-the-Wolds, a town of Gloucestershire. Sir Jacob Astley, who commanded for the king, was totally defeated; and the prostration of the Royalists was on that day finally sealed. Now, it was some months *after* Naseby that Milton, without reserve, forgave his erring wife, and reinstated her at the head of his family. Some private calamity must have concurred about this time with their political overthrow to overwhelm the Powells. For a season they were ruined. But Milton, forgetting all injuries, received the entire family into his own house. So much for the real historic Mary Powell as compared with the Mary Powell of romance. [The romance to which De Quincey refers is Miss Manning's *Maiden and Married Life of Mary Powell*, published anonymously in 1851. But, however just his remarks on that novel may be, he is altogether wrong in his chronology in this note. Milton's marriage with Mary Powell was at Whitsuntide in 1643, *not* 1645; and the return of his wife after her desertion of him was in July or August 1645,—*not* "some months after" Naseby (which battle was fought 14th June 1645), but immediately after. Her father and mother, with the rest of the Powell family, found refuge in Milton's house in the Barbican, London, after the surrender of Oxford to Fairfax in June 1646,—which event had obliged them to leave Oxfordshire. I am not sure but De Quincey may have been led into this confusion of dates in his note by a mere misprint in the text he was revising. "At Whitsuntide, in the year 1645, having reached his 35th year, Milton married Mary Powell": so the text now stands; but, as Milton was in his 35th year at Whitsuntide 1643, may not De Quincey have originally written 1643, and been afterwards led astray by forgetting this and accepting the 1645 which had been substituted by a printer's error?—M.]

moned back to her home, she refused to return. Upon this provocation, Milton set himself seriously to consider the extent of the obligations imposed by the nuptial vow, and soon came to the conclusion that in point of conscience it was not less dissoluble for hopeless incompatibility of temper than for positive adultery, and that human laws, in so far as they opposed this principle, called for reformation. These views he laid before the public in his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce." In treating this question he had relied entirely upon the force of argument, not aware that he had the countenance of any great authorities; but, finding soon afterwards that some of the early reformers, Bucer and P. Martyr, had taken the same view as himself, he drew up an account of their comments on this subject. Hence arose the second of his tracts on Divorce. Meantime, as it was certain that many would abide by what they supposed to be the positive language of Scripture in opposition to all authority whatsoever, he thought it advisable to write a third tract on the proper interpretation of the chief passages in Scripture which refer to this point. A fourth tract, by way of answer to the different writers who had opposed his opinions, terminated the series.

Meantime the lady whose rash conduct had provoked her husband into these speculations saw reason to repent of her indiscretion, and, finding that Milton held her desertion to have cancelled all claims upon his justice, wisely resolved upon making her appeal to his generosity. This appeal was not made in vain: in a single interview at the house of a common friend, where she had contrived to surprise him and suddenly to throw herself at his feet, he granted her a full forgiveness; and so little did he allow himself to remember her misconduct, or that of her family in having countenanced her desertion, that soon afterwards, when they were involved in the general ruin of the royal cause, he received the whole of them into his house, and exerted his political influence very freely on their behalf. Fully to appreciate this behaviour, we must recollect that Milton was not rich, and that no part of his wife's marriage portion (£1000) was ever paid to him.

His thoughts now settled upon the subject of Education,

which it must not be forgotten that he connected systematically with domestic liberty. In 1644 he published his essay on this great theme, in the form of a letter to his friend Hartlib, himself a person of no slight consideration. In the same year he wrote his "Areopagitica: a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing." This we are to consider in the light of an oral pleading or regular oration, for he tells us expressly (*Def.* 2) that he wrote it "ad justæ orationis modum." It is the finest specimen extant of generous scorn. And very remarkable it is that Milton, who broke the ground on this great theme, has exhausted the arguments which bear upon it. He opened the subject; he closed it. And, were there no other monument of his patriotism and his genius, for this alone he would deserve to be held in perpetual veneration. In the following year, 1645, was published the first collection of his early poems; with his sanction, undoubtedly, but probably not upon his suggestion. The times were too full of anxiety to allow of much encouragement to polite literature: at no period were there fewer readers of poetry. And, for himself in particular, with the exception of a few sonnets, it is probable that he composed as little as others read for the next ten years; so great were his political exertions.

Early in 1649 the king was put to death.[1] For a full view of the state of parties which led to this memorable event, we must refer the reader to the history of the times. That act was done by the Independent party, to which Milton belonged, and was precipitated by the intrigues of the Presbyterians, who were making common cause with the king, to insure the overthrow of the Independents. The lamentations and outcries of the Presbyterians were long and loud. Under colour of a generous sympathy with the unhappy prince, they mourned for their own political extinction and the triumph of their enemies. This Milton well knew; and, to expose the selfishness of their clamours, as well as to disarm their appeals to the popular feeling, he now published his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates."[2] In the first part

[1] 30th January 1648-9.—M.
[2] Published in February 1648-9.—M.

of this he addresses himself to the general question of tyrannicide, justifying it, first, by arguments of general reason, and, secondly, by the authority of the Reformers. But in the latter part he argues the case personally, contending that the Presbyterians at least were not entitled to condemn the king's death, who, in levying war and doing battle against the king's person, had done so much that tended to no other result. "If then," is his argument, "in these proceedings against their king, they may not finish, by the usual course of justice, what they have begun, they could not lawfully begin at all." The argument seems inconclusive, even as addressed *ad hominem*. The struggle bore the character of a war between independent parties, rather than a judicial inquiry; and in war the life of a prisoner becomes sacred.

At this time the Council of State had resolved no longer to employ the language of a rival people in their international concerns, but to use the Latin tongue as a neutral and indifferent instrument. The office of Latin Secretary, therefore, was created, and bestowed upon Milton. His hours from henceforth must have been pretty well occupied by official labours. Yet at this time he undertook a service to the state more invidious and perhaps more perilous than any in which his politics ever involved him. On the very day of the king's execution, and even below the scaffold, had been sold the earliest copies of a work admirably fitted to shake the new government, and which, for the sensation produced at the time, and the lasting controversy as to its authorship, is one of the most remarkable known in literary history. This was the "Eikon Basilike, or Royal Image," professing to be a series of meditations drawn up by the late king on the leading events from the very beginning of the national troubles. Appearing at this critical moment, and co-operating with the strong reaction of the public mind already effected in the king's favour by his violent death, this book produced an impression absolutely unparalleled in that century. Fifty thousand copies, it is asserted, were sold within one year; and a posthumous power was thus given to the king's name by one little book, which exceeded, in alarm to his enemies, all that his armies could accomplish in his lifetime. No

remedy could meet the evil in degree. As the only one that seemed fitted to it in kind, Milton drew up a running commentary upon each separate head of the original; and, as that had been entitled The King's Image, he gave to his own the title of "Eikonoclastes, or Image Breaker," the famous surname of some amongst the Byzantine Cæsars who broke in pieces what they considered superstitious images.[1]

This work was drawn up with the usual polemic ability of Milton; but, by its very plan and purpose, it threw him upon difficulties which no ability could meet. It had that inevitable disadvantage which belongs to all ministerial and secondary works: the order and choice of topics being all determined by the Eikon, Milton, for the first time, wore an air of constraint and servility, following a leader and obeying his motions, as an engraver is controlled by the designer, or a translator by his original. It is plain, from the pains he took to exonerate himself from such a reproach, that he felt his task to be an invidious one. The majesty of grief, expressing itself with Christian meekness, and appealing, as it were, from the grave to the consciences of men, could not be violated without a recoil of angry feeling, ruinous to the effect of any logic, or rhetoric the most persuasive. The affliction of a great prince, his solitude, his rigorous imprisonment, his constancy to some purposes which were not selfish, his dignity of demeanour in the midst of his heavy trials, and his truly Christian fortitude in his final sufferings —these formed a rhetoric which made its way to all hearts. Against such influences the eloquence of Greece would have been vain. The nation was spell-bound; and a majority of its population neither could nor would be disenchanted.

Milton was ere long called to plead the same great cause upon an ampler stage, and before an audience less preoccupied with hostile views,—to plead not on behalf of his party against the Presbyterians and Royalists, but on behalf of his country against the insults of a hired Frenchman, and at the bar of the whole Christian world. Charles II had resolved to state his father's case to all Europe. This was natural, for very few people on the Continent knew what cause had brought his father to the block, or why he himself was a vagrant

[1] Milton's *Eikonoclastes* was published in October 1649.—M.

exile from his throne. For his advocate he selected Claudius Salmasius, and that was most injudicious. This man, eminent among the scholars of the day, had some brilliant accomplishments which were useless in such a service, while in those which were really indispensable he was singularly deficient. He was ignorant of the world, wanting in temper and self-command, conspicuously unfurnished with eloquence, or the accomplishments of a good writer, and not so much as master of a pure Latin style. Even as a scholar he was very unequal; he had committed more important blunders than any man of his age, and, being generally hated, had been more frequently exposed than others to the harsh chastisements of men inferior to himself in learning. Yet the most remarkable deficiency of all which Salmasius betrayed was in his entire ignorance, whether historical or constitutional, of everything which belonged to the case.

Having such an antagonist, inferior to him in all possible qualifications, whether of nature, of art, of situation, it may be supposed that Milton's triumph was absolute.[1] He was now thoroughly indemnified for the poor success of his "Eikonoclastes." In that instance he had the mortification of knowing that all England read and wept over the king's book, whilst his own reply was scarcely heard of.[2] But here the tables were turned. The very friends of Salmasius complained that, while his defence was rarely inquired after, the answer to it, "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano," was the subject of conversation from one end of Europe to the other. It was burnt publicly at Paris and Toulouse, and, by way of special annoyance to Salmasius, who lived in Holland, was translated into Dutch.

Salmasius died in 1653, before he could accomplish an answer that satisfied himself; and the fragment which he left behind him was not published until it was no longer

[1] In his Latin *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* ("Defence for the English People"), published in April 1651, in reply to the *Defensio Regia* ("Royal Defence") of Salmasius.—M.

[2] This is a mistake. Milton's *Eikonoclastes*, though not read, of course, by all the myriads who wept over the *Eikon Basilika*, to which it was a reply, had admiring readers enough, both at home and abroad. A second and enlarged edition of it was called for, and it was translated into French.—M.

safe for Milton to rejoin. Meantime, others pressed forward against Milton in the same controversy, of whom some were neglected, one was resigned to the pen of his nephew Phillips, and one answered diffusely by himself. This was Du Moulin, or, as Milton persisted in believing, Morus, a reformed minister then resident in Holland, and at one time a friend of Salmasius. Two years after the publication of this man's book ("Regii Sanguinis Clamor") Milton received multiplied assurances from Holland that Morus was its true author. This was not wonderful. Morus had corrected the press, had adopted the principles and passions of the book, and perhaps at first had not been displeased to find himself reputed the author. In reply, Milton published his "Defensio Secunda pro Populo Anglicano,"[1] seasoned in every page with some stinging allusions to Morus. All the circumstances of his early life are recalled, and some were such as the grave divine would willingly have concealed from the public eye. He endeavoured to avert too late the storm of wit and satire about to burst on him, by denying the work, and even revealing the author's real name; but Milton resolutely refused to make the slightest alteration. The true reason of this probably was that the work was written so exclusively against Morus, full of personal scandal, and puns and gibes upon his name, which in Greek signifies a fool, that it would have been useless and irrelevant as an answer to any other person. In Milton's conduct on this occasion there is a want both of charity and candour. Personally, however, Morus had little ground for complaint; he had bearded the lion by submitting to be reputed the author of a work not his own. Morus replied, and Milton closed the controversy by a "Defence of Himself" in 1655.

He had, indeed, about this time some domestic afflictions, which reminded him of the frail tenure on which all human blessings were held, and the necessity that he should now begin to concentrate his mind upon the great works which he meditated. In 1651 his first wife died,[2] after she had given him three daughters. In that year he had already lost the use of one eye, and was warned by the physicians that, if he persisted in his task of replying to Salmasius, he

[1] Published in 1654.—M. [2] It was in May or June 1652.—M.

would probably lose the other. The warning was soon accomplished; according to the common account, in 1654, but, upon collating his letter to Philaras the Athenian with his own pathetic statement in the "Defensio Secunda," we are disposed to date it from 1652. In 1655 he resigned his office of secretary, in which he had latterly been obliged to use an assistant.[1]

Some time before this period he had married his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, to whom it is supposed that he was very tenderly attached. In 1657 she died in childbirth, together with her child, an event which he has recorded in a very beautiful sonnet.[2] This loss, added to his blindness, must have made his home, for some years, desolate and comfortless. Distress, indeed, was now gathering rapidly upon him. The death of Cromwell in the following year, and the unaspiring character of his eldest son, held out an invitation to the ambitious intriguers of the day which they were not slow to improve. It soon became too evident to Milton's discernment that all things were hurrying forward to restoration of the ejected family. Sensible of the risk, therefore, and without much hope, but obeying the summons of his conscience, he wrote a short tract on the ready and easy way to establish a free commonwealth,[3] concluding with these noble words: "Thus much I should perhaps have said, "though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and "stones, and had none to cry to, but with the prophet, Oh, "earth! earth! earth! to tell the very soil itself what her "perverse inhabitants are deaf to. Nay, though what I have "spoken should happen (which Thou suffer not, who didst "create free, nor Thou next, who didst redeem us from being "servants of men) to be the last words of our expiring "liberty." A slighter pamphlet on the same subject, "Brief

[1] No, he did *not* resign his secretaryship in 1655; but, though totally blind since 1652, continued in it (though with assistants for the mere routine work) through all the rest of Oliver's protectorate, and through Richard's protectorate, and through the subsequent Republican anarchy, to as late as the end of 1659, when the Restoration was close at hand.—M.

[2] He married Catherine Woodcock 12th November 1656, and she died 10th February 1657-8.—M.

[3] Early in 1660.—M.

Notes" upon a sermon by one Dr. Griffiths, must be supposed to be written rather with a religious purpose of correcting a false application of sacred texts than with any great expectation of political benefit to his party. Dr. Johnson, with his customary insolence, says, that he kicked when he could strike no longer: more justly it might be said that he held up a solitary hand of protestation on behalf of that cause, now in its expiring struggles, which he had maintained when prosperous, and that he continued to the last one uniform language, though he now believed resistance to be hopeless, and knew it to be full of peril.

That peril was soon realized. In the spring of 1660 the Restoration was accomplished amidst the tumultuous rejoicings of the people.[1] It was certain that the vengeance of government would lose no time in marking its victims; for some of them, in anticipation, had already fled. Milton wisely withdrew from the first fury of the persecution which now descended on his party. He secreted himself in London, and, when he returned into the public eye in the winter, found himself no farther punished than by a general disqualification for the public service and the disgrace of a public burning inflicted on his "Eikonoclastes" and his "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano."

Apparently it was not long after this time that he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshul, a lady of good family in Cheshire.[2] In what year he began the composition of his "Paradise Lost" is not certainly known: some have supposed in 1658. There is better ground for fixing the period of its close. During the plague of 1665, he retired to Chalfont, and at that time Elwood the Quaker read the poem in a finished state. The general interruption of business in London, occasioned by the plague, and prolonged by the great fire in 1666, explains why the publication was delayed for nearly two years. The contract with the publisher is dated April 26, 1667, and in the course of that year the "Paradise Lost" was published. Originally it was printed in ten books: in the second and subsequent editions the

[1] Charles II made his triumphant entry into London 29th May 1660.—M.

[2] The marriage was on 12th February 1662-3.—M.

seventh and tenth books were each divided into two. Milton received five pounds in the first instance on the publication of the book. His farther profits were regulated by the sale of the three first editions. Each was to consist of 1500 copies; and on the second and third respectively reaching a sale of 1300 he was to receive a further sum of five pounds for each: making a total of fifteen pounds. The receipt for the second sum of five pounds is dated April 26, 1669.

In 1670 Milton published his "History of Britain" from the fabulous period to the Norman Conquest. And in the same year he published, in one volume, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes."[1] The "Paradise Regained" it has been currently asserted that Milton preferred to "Paradise Lost." This is not true; but he may have been justly offended by the false principles on which some of his friends maintained a reasonable opinion. The "Paradise Regained" is inferior, but only by the necessity of its subject and design, not by less finished composition. In the "Paradise Lost" Milton had a field properly adapted to a poet's purposes: a few hints in Scripture were expanded. Nothing was altered, nothing absolutely added; but that which was told in the Scriptures in sum, or in its last results, was developed into its whole succession of parts. Thus, for instance, "There was war in heaven" furnished the matter for a whole book. Now for the latter poem,—which part of our Saviour's life was it best to select as that in which Paradise was Regained? He might have taken the Crucifixion, and here he had a much wider field than in the Temptation; but then he was subject to this dilemma. If he modified, or in any way altered, the full details of the four Evangelists, he shocked the religious sense of all Christians; yet the purposes of a poet would often require that he should so modify them. With a fine sense of this difficulty, he chose the narrow basis of the Temptation in the Wilderness, because there the whole had been wrapped up by Scripture in a few obscure abstractions. Thus, "He showed him all the kingdoms of the earth" is expanded, without offence to the nicest religious scruple, into that matchless succession of pictures which bring before us the learned glories of Athens, Rome in her

[1] They were published together in 1671.—M.

civil grandeur, and the barbaric splendour of Parthia. The actors being only two, the action of "Paradise Regained" is unavoidably limited. But, in respect of composition, it is perhaps more elaborately finished than "Paradise Lost."

In 1672 he published in Latin a new scheme of Logic, on the method of Ramus, in which Dr. Johnson suspects him to have meditated the very eccentric crime of rebellion against the universities. Be that as it may, this little book is in one view not without interest. All scholastic systems of logic confound logic and metaphysics; and some of Milton's metaphysical doctrines, as the present Bishop of Winchester has noticed, have a reference to the doctrines brought forward in his posthumous Theology. The history of the last-named work is remarkable. That such a treatise had existed was well known, but it had disappeared and was supposed to be irrecoverably lost. Meantime, in the year 1823, a Latin manuscript was discovered in the State-Paper Office, under circumstances which leave little doubt of its being the identical work which Milton was known to have composed. By the king's command, it was edited by Mr. Sumner, the present Bishop of Winchester, and separately published in a translation.[1]

What he published after the scheme of logic is not important enough to merit a separate notice. His end was now approaching. In the summer of 1674 he was still cheerful and in the possession of his intellectual faculties. But the vigour of his bodily constitution had been silently giving way, through a long course of years, to the ravages of gout. It was at length thoroughly undermined; and about the 10th of November 1674[2] he died, with tranquillity so profound that his attendants were unable to determine the exact moment of his decease. He was buried, with unusual marks of honour, in the chancel of St. Giles', at Cripplegate.

[The published lives of Milton are very numerous.

[1] Both the Latin original of Milton's long-lost treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* and the English version of it were published in 1825.—M.

[2] On Sunday the 8th of November 1674.—M.

Among the best and most copious are those prefixed to the editions of Milton's Works, by Bishop Newton, secondly by Todd, and thirdly by Symmons. An article of considerable length, founded upon the latter, will be found in Rees's *Cyclopædia.* But the most remarkable is that written by Dr. Johnson in his *Lives of the British Poets;* a production grievously disfigured by prejudice, yet well deserving the student's attention, for its intrinsic merits, as well as for the celebrity which it has attained.][1]

[1] This closing paragraph must (from internal evidence) have been added at the press, I presume, in or about the year 1830 or 1831, when the little sketch was written and probably printed. I have no wish or design to charge the unknown writer with any *intentional* falsification of my very determinate opinions upon the chief biographers of Milton. Bishop Newton and Archdeacon Todd I believe to have been honest men, but brought unavoidably into positions trying to that honesty, and even into inextricable perplexities, by the collision between two most solemn obligations,—viz. on the one hand loyalty to the Church of England, and on the other hand loyalty to the mighty poet whose intellectual interests they had spontaneously engaged to sustain, though well knowing that this great man had ranked as the most undistinguishing, fierce, and sometimes even malicious (though still conscientious) assailant that ever tilted against the splendid Anglican Establishment. Dutiful sons (being at the same time beneficed servants) of that Establishment could not effectually mediate between interests so radically opposed. Would it indeed be fair to expect from one who had simply promised us a biographic sketch of an individual that, amongst the mere collateral issues emerging as questions incidentally connected with his theme, he should, for instance, exhaust the great problem of Church Government: whether best administered by Prelates arranged in purple and gold, or by obscure and dust-begrimed Elders, or (in defiance of all alien authority) administered *Independently—i.e.*, by each congregation separately for itself; in which case each congregation is a perfect church hanging by its own hook, and owning no debt, great or small, to any brother congregation, except only that of an exemplary kicking in case such brother should presume to interfere with advice not asked for, or with impertinent suggestion. Newton and Todd extricated themselves with decency from a difficulty which it was impossible to face with absolute success; and the main impression left upon my mind to their disadvantage is—that their materials were chaotic, difficult to organize without the powers of a *demiurgus,* and accordingly not organized. As to Symmons, he was a *Whig;* and his covert purpose was to secure Milton for his own party before that party was fully secreted by the new tendencies beginning to move amongst the partisanships of the age. Until Dr. Sacheverel came, in Queen Anne's reign, the crystallizations of Whig and Tory

were rudimental and incomplete. Symmons, therefore, was under a bias and a morbid kind of deflexion. He was, besides, tumultuary and precipitate in his modes of composition. Finally, as regards Dr. Johnson, am I the man that would suffer him to escape under the trivial impeachment of "prejudice"? Dr. Johnson, viewed in relation to Milton, was a malicious, mendacious, and dishonest man. He was met by temptations many and strong to falsehood; and these temptations he had not the virtue to resist. [The closing paragraph, which De Quincey disowns by putting it within brackets, but which appeared in the original of 1838 as an integral part of the sketch, and therefore without brackets, was, I have little doubt, by Mr. Charles Knight, acting as editor of the Miscellany in which the sketch was included. See footnote, *ante*, p. 86.—M.]

POSTSCRIPT RESPECTING JOHNSON'S LIFE OF MILTON[1]

THE sketch of Milton's life was written[2] to meet the hasty demand of a powerful association (then in full activity) for organizing a systematic movement towards the improvement of popular reading. The limitations, as regarded space, which this association found itself obliged to impose, put an end to all hopes that any opening could be found in this case for an improved life as regarded research into the facts, and the true interpretation of facts. These, though often scandalously false, scandalously misconstructed even where true in the *letter* of the narrative, and read by generations of biographers in an odious spirit of malignity to Milton, it was nevertheless a mere necessity, silently and acquiescingly, to adopt in a case where any noticeable change would call for a justification, and any adequate justification would call for much ampler space. Under these circumstances, finding myself cut off from one mode of service[3] to the suffering reputation of

[1] What is here entitled a Postscript, and quite properly so, appeared in the guise of a "Prefatory Memorandum" in that volume of De Quincey's Collective Edition of his writings, published in 1859, in which he reprinted the biographic sketch of 1838. Although but a Postscript, it is too long and substantial to be printed in note form.—M.

[2] I believe somewhere about twenty-nine years ago: a date which I deduce indirectly from a casual recollection that the composition of this little paper synchronized pretty exactly in its close with the commencement of the ever-memorable Bristol riots on occasion of Sir Charles Wetherell's official visit. [See *ante*, p. 86, footnote.—M.]

[3] Which service, however, I have little doubt, will by this time have been much more adequately performed than I myself could hope to perform it, by Mr. Masson in his recent *Life of Milton;* founding

this greatest among men, it occurred, naturally, that I might imperfectly compensate that defect by service of the same character applied in a different direction. Facts, falsely stated or maliciously coloured, require, too frequently, elaborate details for their exposure: but transient opinions, or solemn judgments, or insinuations dexterously applied to openings made by vagueness of statement or laxity of language, it is possible oftentimes to face and dissipate instantaneously by a single word of seasonable distinction, or by a simple rectification of the logic. Sometimes a solitary whisper, suggesting a fact that had been overlooked, or a logical relation that had been wilfully darkened, is found sufficient for the triumphant overthrow of a scoff that has corroded Milton's memory for three[1] generations. Accident prevented me from doing much even in this line for the exposure of Milton's injuries: hereafter I hope to do more; but in the meantime I call the reader's attention to one such rectification applied by myself to the effectual prostration of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the worst enemy that Milton and his great cause have ever been called on to confront; the worst as regards undying malice: in which qualification for mischief Dr. Johnson was not at all behind the diabolical Lauder[2] or the maniacal Curran[3]; and the foremost by many degrees in talents and opportunities for giving effect to his malice. I will here expand the several steps in the process of the case, so that the least attentive of readers, or least logical, may understand in what mode and in what degree Dr. Johnson, hunting for a triumph, allowed himself to trespass across the frontiers of calumny and falsehood, and at the same time may understand how far my own exposure smashes the Doctor's attempt in the shell.

Dr. Johnson is pursuing the narrative of Milton's travels in Italy; and he has arrived at that point where Milton,

my hopes, in this particular case, especially upon the very distinguished success which crowned his labours upon Chatterton; labours the same in kind, but in degree much more severe, as applied to more slender materials.

[1] *i.e.*, since Dr. Johnson gave utterance to that scoff.

[2] The frantic anti-Miltonist William Lauder (1710-1771).—M.

[3] One of the peculiarities of the Irish lawyer and orator John Philpot Curran (1750-1817) was an antipathy to Milton.—M.

then in the south of that peninsula, and designing to go forward into Greece, Egypt, and Syria, is suddenly arrested by great tidings from England: so great, indeed, that in Milton's ear, who well knew to what issue the public disputes were tending, these tidings must have sounded revolutionary. The king was preparing a second military expedition against Scotland,—that is against Scotland as the bulwark of an odious anti-episcopal church. It was notorious that the English aristocracy by a very large section, and much of the English nation upon motives variously combined, some on religious grounds, some on political, could not be relied on for any effectual support in a war having such objects, and opening so many occasions for diverting the national arms to popular purposes. It was pretty well known also that dreadful pecuniary embarrassments would at last *compel* the king to summon, in right earnest, such a Parliament as would no longer be manageable, but would in the very first week of its meeting find a security against a sudden dissolution. Using its present advantages prudently, any Parliament would *now* bring the king virtually upon his knees: and the issue must be—ample concession on the king's part to claimants now become national, or else *Revolution and Civil War.* At such a time, and with such prospects, what honest patriot could have endured to absent himself, and under no more substantial excuse than a transient gratification to his classical and archæological tastes?—tastes liberal and honourable beyond a doubt, but not of a rank to interfere with more solemn duties. This change in his prospects, and consequently in his duties, was painful enough, we may be sure, to Milton: but with *his* principles, and his deep self-denying sense of duty, there seemed no room for question or hesitation: and already at *this* point, before they go a step further, all readers capable of measuring the disappointment, or of appreciating the temper in which such a self-conquest must have been achieved, will sympathize heroically with Milton's victorious resistance to a temptation so specially framed as a snare for *him*, and at the same time will sympathize fraternally with Milton's bitter suffering of self-sacrifice as to all that formed the sting of that temptation. Such is the spirit in which many a noble heart, that

may be far from approving Milton's politics, will read this secret Miltonic struggle more than two hundred years after all is over. Such is *not* the spirit (as we shall now see) in which it has been read by falsehood and malice.

2. But, before coming to *that*, there is a sort of parenthesis of introduction. Dr. Johnson summons us all not to suffer any veneration for Milton to intercept our merriment at what, according to *his* version of the story, Milton is now doing. I therefore, on *my* part, call on the reader to observe that in Dr. Johnson's opinion, if a great man, the glory of his race, should happen through human frailty to suffer a momentary eclipse of his grandeur, the proper and becoming utterance of our impressions as to such a collapse would not be by silence and sadness, but by vulgar yells of merriment. The Doctor is anxious that we should not in any case moderate our laughter under any remembrance of *who* it is that we are laughing at.

3. Well, having stated this little item in the Johnson creed, I am not meditating any waste of time in discussing it, especially because the case which the Doctor's maxim contemplates is altogether imaginary. The case in which he recommended unrestrained laughter was a case of "great promises and small performances." Where then does Dr. Sam. show us such a case? Is it in any part or section of Milton's Italian experience? Logically it ought to be so; because else what relation can it bear to any subject which the Doctor has brought before us? But in anything that Milton on this occasion, or on any occasion whatever connected with the sacrifice of his Greek, Egyptian, or Syrian projects, either said or did, there is no promise at all, small or great. And, as to any relation between the supposed promise and the subsequent performance, as though the one were incommensurable to the other, doubtless many are the incommensurable quantities known to mathematicians; but I conceive that the geometry which measures their relations, where the promise was never made and the performance never contemplated, must be lost and hid away in secret chambers of moonshine beyond the "recuperative" powers (Johnsonically speaking) of Apollonius himself.[1] Milton

[1] Apollonius, Greek mathematician, B.C. 240.—M.

made no promises at all, consequently could not break any. And to represent him, for a purpose of blame and ridicule, as doing either *this* or *that*, is malice at any rate ; too much, I fear, is wilful, conscious, deliberate falsehood.

4. What was it, then, which Milton did in Italy, as to which I never heard of his glorying, though most fervently he was entitled to glory ? Knowing that in a land which is passing through stages of political renovation, of searching purification, and of all which we now understand by the term *revolution*, golden occasions offer themselves unexpectedly for suggesting golden enlargements or revisions of abuses else overlooked, but that, when the wax has hardened, the opening is lost, so that great interests may depend upon the actual presence of some individual reformer, and that his absence may operate injuriously through long generations, he wisely resolved (though saying little about the enormous sacrifice which this entailed) to be present as soon as the great crucible was likely to be in active operation. And the sacrifice which he made for this great service of watching opportunities which so memorably he afterwards improved was—that he renounced the heavenly spectacle of the Ægean Sea and its sunny groups of islands, renounced the sight of Attica, of the Theban districts, of the Morea ; next of that ancient river Nile, the river of Pharaoh and Moses, of the Pyramids, and the hundred-gated Thebes: finally, he renounced the land of Syria, much of which was then doubtless unsafe for a Frank of any religion, and for a Christian of any nation. But he might have travelled in one district of Syria, viz. Palestine, which for him had paramount attractions. All these objects of commanding interest to any profound scholar,—Greece, the Grecian isles, Egypt, and Palestine,—he surrendered to his sense of duty ; not by any promise or engagement, but by the *act* then and there of turning his face homewards ; well aware at the time that his chance was small indeed, under his peculiar prospects, of ever recovering his lost chance. He did not promise any sacrifice. Who was then in Italy to whom he could rationally have confided such an engagement ? He *made* the sacrifice without a word of promise. So much for Dr. Johnson's "small performance."

5. But, supposing that there *had* been any words uttered by Milton authorizing great expectations of what he would do in the way of patriotic service, where is the proof that the very largest promises conceivable, interpreted (as they ought to have been) by the known circumstances of Milton's social position, were not realized in vast over-measure? I contend that even the various polemic[1] works which Milton published through the next twenty years,—for instance, his new views on Education, on Freedom of the Press, to some extent also his Apology for Tyrannicide, but above all his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* against the most insolent, and in this particular case the most *ignorant*, champion that literary Christendom could have selected,—that immortal Apology for England

"Whereof all Europe rang from side to side,"—

had this been all, he would have redeemed in the noblest manner any promises that he *could* have made, not to repeat that he made none. But there is a deeper knavery in Dr. Johnson than simply what shows itself thus far. One word remains to be said on another aspect of the case.

6. Thus far we see the Doctor fastening upon Milton a forged engagement, for the one sole purpose of showing that the responsibility thus contracted was ludicrously betrayed. Now let us understand *how*. Supposing Milton to have done what the Doctor vaguely asserts, *i.e.* to have promised that, during the coming revolutionary struggle in his country, he would himself do something to make this struggle grand or serviceable,—how was it, where was it, when was it, that he brought his vow to an inglorious solution, to the Horatian solution of *Parturiunt Montes*, &c.? Dr. Johnson would apparently have thought it a most appropriate and heroic solution if Milton had made himself a major in the Lobsters[2] of Sir Arthur Hazilrigg, or among the Ironsides of Cromwell.

[1] "*Polemic*":—The reader ought to be aware that this word, though commonly restricted through pure ignorance to controversial *theology*, is not properly subject to any such limitation: what is hostile is unconditionally polemic.

[2] "*Lobsters*":—A cavalry regiment (so called from their scarlet unifrom) raised and commanded by Sir Arthur for the Parliament.

But, on the contrary, he made himself (*risum teneatis!*) a schoolmaster. Dr. Johnson (himself a schoolmaster at one time), if he had possessed any sense of true dignity, would have recollected and said secretly to himself, *de te fabula narratur*, and would have abhorred to throw out lures to a mocking audience when he himself lurked under the mask offered to public banter. On this, however, I do not pause; neither do I pause upon a question so entirely childish as whether Milton ever was, in any legal sense, clothed with the character of schoolmaster? I refuse even, out of reverential sympathy with that majestic mind that would have made Milton refuse, to insist upon the fact that, even under this most puerile assault upon his social rank, Milton did really (by making himself secretary to Cromwell) rise into something very like the official station of Foreign Secretary. All this I blow away to the four winds. I am now investigating the sincerity and honesty of Dr. Johnson under a trying temptation from malice that cannot be expressed nor measured. He had bound himself to bring out Samson blind and amongst enemies to make sport for the Philistines at Gaza. And the sport was to lie in the collision between a mighty promise and a miserable performance. What the Doctor tells us, therefore, in support of this allegation, is that somewhere or other Milton announced a magnificent display of patriotism at some time and in some place, but that when he reached London all this pomp of preparation evanesced in his opening a private boarding-school.

Upon this I have one question to propound; and I will make it more impressive and perhaps intelligible by going back into history, and searching about for a great man as to whom the same question may be put with more effect. Most of us think that Hannibal was a great man; and amongst distinguished people of letters, my own contemporaries, when any accident has suggested a comparison amongst the intellectual leaders of antiquity, I have noted that a very large majority (two-thirds I should say against one) gave a most cordial vote for the supremacy of this one-eyed Carthaginian. Well, this man was once a boy; and, when not more than nine years old, he was solemnly led by his father to the

blazing altar of some fierce avenging deity (Moloch perhaps) such as his compatriots worshipped; and by all the sanctities that ever he had heard of the boy was pledged and sacramentally bound to an undying hatred and persecution of the Romans. And most people are of opinion that he, the man who fought with no backer but a travelling[1] earthquake at Lake Thrasymene, and subsequently at Cannæ left 50,000 Romans on the ground, and for seventeen years took his pleasure in Italy, pretty well redeemed his vow.

Now let us suppose (and it is no extravagant supposition even for those days) that some secretary, a slave in the house of Amilcar, had kept a Boswellian record of Hannibal's words and acts from childhood upwards. Naturally there would have been a fine *illustration* (such as the age allowed) of the great vow at the altar. All readers in after times, arrested and impressed by the scene, would inquire for its sequel: did *that* correspond? If amongst these readers there were a Samuel Johnson, he would turn over a page or two, so as to advance by a few months, and there he might possibly find a commemoration of some festival or carousing party in which the too faithful and literal secretary had recorded that the young *malek* Hannibal had insisted angrily on having at dinner beefsteaks and oyster-sauce,—a dish naturally imported by the Phœnician sailors from the Cassiterides of Cornwall. Then would rise Sam in his glory, and, turning back to the vow, would insist that *this* was its fulfilment. Others would seek it on Mount St. Bernard, on the line of the Apennines, on the deadly field of Cannæ; but Sam would read thus: Suffer not your veneration to intercept your just and reasonable mockery. Our great prince vows eternal hatred to the enemies of his country, and he redeems his vow by eating a beefsteak with a British accompaniment of oyster-sauce.

The same question arises severally in the Milton and the

[1] A feat, however, which our Sir Robert Sale found it possible to repeat at Jellalabad in 1842, and under this important disadvantage—that our earthquake made no pretence to equity or neutrality, but most unfairly sided with Akbar Khan and his Affghans; whereas Hannibal's struck out right and left, and scattered its favours *slantindicularly* (to speak after Cousin Jonathan) through both armies.

Hannibal case,—What relation, unless for the false fleeting eye of malice, has the act or the occasion indicated to the supposed solemnity of the vow alleged? Show us the logic which approximates the passages in either life.

I fear that at this point any plain man of simple integrity will feel himself disconcerted, as in some mystification purposely framed to perplex him. "Let me understand," he will say, "if a man draws a bill payable in twenty years after date, how is he liable to be called upon for payment at a term far within its legal *curriculum?*" Precisely so: the very excess of the knavery avails to conceal it. Hannibal confessedly had pledged himself to a certain result, whereas Milton had *not;* and to that extent Hannibal's case was the weaker. But assume for the moment that both stand on the same footing. Each is supposed to have guaranteed some great event upon the confidence which he has in his own great powers. But, of course, he understands that, until the full development of those powers on which exclusively he relies, he does not come within the peril of his own obligation. And, this being a postulate of mere natural justice, I contend that there was no more relation, such as could have duped Dr. Johnson for a moment, between any supposable promise of Milton's in Italy and that particular week in which he undertook the training of his youthful nephews (or, if it soothes the rancour of Dr. Johnson to say so, in which he opened a boarding-school), than between Hannibal at the altar and the same Hannibal dining on a beefsteak. From all the days of Milton's life carefully to pick out that one on which only Milton did what Sam implicitly thinks a mean "low-lived" action is a knavery that could not have gone undetected had the case been argued at bar by counsel. It was base, it must have been base, to enter on the trade of schoolmaster; for, as Ancient Pistol, that great moralist, teaches us, "base is the man that pays"; and Milton probably had no other durable resource for paying. But still, however vile in Milton, this does not at all mend the logic of the Doctor in singling out that day or week from the thousands through which Milton lived.

Dr. Johnson wished to go further; but he was pulled up by an ugly remembrance. In earlier years the desperation of

malice had led him into a perilous participation in Lauder's atrocities; by haste and by leaps as desperate as the offence, on that occasion he escaped; but hardly: and I believe, much as the oblivions of time aid such escapes by obliterating the traces or the meanings of action, and the coherences of oral evidence, that even yet by following the guidance of Dr. Douglas (the unmasker of the leading criminal) some discoveries might be made as to Johnson's co-operation.

But in writing *The Lives of the Poets*, one of the Doctor's latest works, he had learned caution. Malice, he found, was not always safe; and it might sometimes be costly. Still, there was plenty of game to be had without too much risk. And the Doctor, prompted by the fiend, resolved to "take a shy," before parting, at the most consecrated of Milton's creations. It really vexes me to notice this second case at all in a situation where I have left myself so little room for unmasking its hollowness. But a whisper is enough if it reaches a watchful ear. What, then, is the supreme jewel which Milton has bequeathed to us? Nobody can doubt that it is *Paradise Lost*.[1]

[1] Not meaning, however, as so many people do, insolently to gainsay the verdict of Milton himself, with whom, for my own part, making the distinctions that *he* would make, I have always coincided. The poet himself is often the best critic on his own works; and in this case Milton expressed with some warmth, and perhaps scorn, his preference of the *Paradise Regained.* Doubtless what disgusted him naturally enough was that too often he found the disparagers of the one Paradise quite as guiltless of all real acquaintance with it as were the *proneurs* of the other. Else the distribution of merits is apparently this: in the later poem the execution is more highly finished; or, at least, partially so. In the elder and larger poem, the scenical opportunities are more colossal and more various. Heaven opening to eject her rebellious children; the unvoyageable depths of ancient Chaos, with its "anarch old" and its eternal war of wrecks; these traversed by that great leading Angel that drew after him the third part of the heavenly host; earliest Paradise dawning upon the warrior-angel out of this far-distant "sea without shore" of chaos; the dreadful phantoms of Sin and Death, prompted by secret sympathy, and snuffing the distant scent of "mortal change on earth," chasing the steps of their great progenitor and sultan; finally the heart-freezing visions, shown and narrated to Adam, of human misery through vast successions of shadowy generations: all these scenical opportunities offered in the *Paradise Lost* become in the hands of the mighty artist elements of undying grandeur not matched on earth. The com-

Into this great *chef-d'œuvre* of Milton it was no doubt Johnson's secret determination to send a telling shot at parting. He would lodge a little *gage d'amitié*, a farewell pledge of hatred, a trifling token (trifling, but such things are not estimated in money) of his eternal malice. Milton's admirers might divide it among themselves; and, if it should happen to fester and rankle in their hearts, so much the better; they were heartily welcome to the poison: not a jot would he deduct for himself if a thousand times greater. O Sam! kill us not with munificence. But now, as I must close within a minute or so, what *is* that pretty souvenir of gracious detestation with which our friend took his leave? The *Paradise Lost*, said he, in effect, is a wonderful work; wonderful; grand beyond all estimate; sublime to a fault. But—well, go on; we are all listening. But—I grieve to say it, wearisome. It creates a world of admiration (*one* world, take notice); but—oh, that I, senior offshoot from the house of Malagrowthers, should live to say it!—ten worlds of *ennui:* one world of astonishment; ten worlds of *tædium vitæ.* Half and half might be tolerated—it is often tolerated by the bibulous and others; but one against ten? No, no!

This, then, was the farewell blessing which Dr. Johnson bestowed upon the *Paradise Lost!* What is my reply? The poem, it seems, is wearisome; Edmund Waller called it *dull.* A man, it is alleged by Dr. Johnson, opens the volume; reads a page or two with feelings allied to awe: next he finds

pass being so much narrower in the *Paradise Regained*, if no other reason operated, inevitably the splendours are sown more thinly. But the great vision of the temptation, the banquet in the wilderness, the wilderness itself, the terrific pathos of the ruined archangel's speech—*'Tis true I am that spirit unfortunate*, &c. (the effect of which, when connected with the stern unpitying answer, is painfully to shock the reader), all these proclaim the ancient skill and the ancient power. And, as regards the skill naturally brightened by long practice, that succession of great friezes which the archangel unrolls in the pictures of Athens, Rome, and Parthia, besides their native and intrinsic beauty, have an unrivalled beauty of position through the reflex illustration which reciprocally they give and receive. [Milton did not express any preference of his own for *Paradise Regained* over *Paradise Lost*, but only dissatisfaction with the opinion, reported to him as general, that *Paradise Regained* was a great falling off from *Paradise Lost.* The fact comes to us from his nephew, Edward Phillips.—M.]

himself rather jaded; then sleepy; naturally shuts up the book; and forgets ever to take it down again. Now, when any work of human art is impeached as wearisome, the first reply is—wearisome to *whom?* For it so happens that nothing exists, absolutely nothing, which is not at some time, and to some person, wearisome or even potentially disgusting. There is no exception for the works of God. "Man delights not me, nor woman either," is the sigh which breathes from the morbid misanthropy of the gloomy but philosophic Hamlet. Weariness, moreover, and even sleepiness, is the natural reaction of awe or of feelings too highly strung; and this reaction in some degree proves the sincerity of the previous awe. In cases of that class, where the impressions of sympathetic veneration have been really unaffected, but carried too far, the mistake is—to have read too much at a time. But these are exceptional cases: to the great majority of readers the poem is wearisome through mere vulgarity and helpless imbecility of mind; not from overstrained excitement, but from pure defect in the *capacity* for excitement. And a moment's reflection at this point lays bare to us the malignity of Dr. Johnson. The logic of that malignity is simply this: that he applies to Milton, as if separately and specially true of *him*, a rule abstracted from human experience spread over the total field of civilisation. All nations are here on a level. Not a hundredth part of their populations is capable of any unaffected sympathy with what is truly great in sculpture, in painting, in music, and by a transcendent necessity in the supreme of Fine Arts—Poetry. To be popular in any but a meagre comparative sense as an artist of whatsoever class is to be *confessedly* a condescender to human infirmities. And, as to the test which Dr. Johnson, by implication, proposes as trying the merits of Milton in his greatest work, viz. the degree in which it was read, the Doctor knew pretty well,—and when by accident he did *not* was inexcusable for neglecting to inquire,—that by the same test all the great classical works of past ages, Pagan or Christian, might be branded with the mark of suspicion as works that had failed of their paramount purpose, viz. a deep control over the modes of thinking and feeling in each successive generation. Were it not for the continued succession

of academic students having a contingent *mercenary* interest in many of the great authors surviving from the wrecks of time, scarcely one edition of fresh copies would be called for in each period of fifty years. And, as to the arts of sculpture and painting, were the great monuments in the former art, those, I mean, inherited from Greece, such as the groups, &c., scattered through Italian mansions,—the Venus, the Apollo, the Hercules, the Faun, the Gladiator, and the marbles in the British Museum, purchased by the Government from the late Lord Elgin,—stripped of their metropolitan advantages, and left to their own unaided attraction in some provincial town, they would not avail to keep the requisite officers of any establishment for housing them in salt and tobacco. We may judge of this by the records left behind by Benjamin Haydon of the difficulty which *he* found in simply upholding their value as wrecks of the Phidian æra. The same law asserts itself everywhere. What is *ideally* grand lies beyond the region of ordinary[1] human sympathies; which must, by a mere instinct of good sense, seek out objects more congenial and upon their own level. One answer to Johnson's killing shot, as he kindly meant it, is

[1] In candour I must add—*if uncultured*. This will suggest a great addition to the one in a hundred whom I have supposed capable of sympathy with the higher class of models For the majority of men have had no advantages, no training, no discipline. How extravagantly unjust, therefore, in the same Benjamin Haydon, whom I have just cited as a witness on *my* side, when he furiously denounces the mob of mechanics and day-labourers in London rushing carelessly past the exhibition room of a great painting by himself, and paying their sixpences by bushels to see Tom Thumb. I have seen Haydon's ignoble and most unjust complaint echoed by multitudes. But this was a mob of pleasure-seekers in Easter week: poor fellows, with horny hands, in quest most rightfully of something to refresh and ventilate their bodily systems, scorched by the eternal fever of unresting days and nights agitated by care. Anything on earth, anything whatever that would unchain the poor galley-slave's wrists from his everlasting oar! And, as to the oil-painting, surely the fields and the Easter flowers would be better than that. Haydon forgot that these poor fellows had never had their natural sensibilities called forth or educated. Amongst them, after all, might lurk a man or two that, *having* such advantages, would have eclipsed even Haydon. And, besides, Haydon forgot that *his* exhibition not only cost a shilling, but would not allow of any uproarious jollification, such as most of us like (none more than Haydon) after a long confinement to labour.

that our brother is not dead but sleeping. Regularly as the coming generations unfold their vast processions, regularly as these processions move forward upon the impulse and summons of a nobler music, regularly as the dormant powers and sensibilities of the intellect in the working man are more and more developed, the *Paradise Lost* will be called for more and more: less and less continually will there be any reason to complain that the immortal book, being once restored to its place, is left to slumber for a generation. So far as regards the Time which is coming; but Dr. Johnson's insulting farewell was an arrow feathered to meet the Past and Present. We may be glad at any rate that the supposed neglect is not a wrong which Milton does, but which Milton suffers. Yet that Dr. Johnson should have pretended to think the case in any special way affecting the reputation or latent powers of Milton,—Dr. Johnson, that knew the fates of Books, and had seen by moonlight, in the Bodleian, the ghostly array of innumerable books long since departed as regards all human interest or knowledge—a review like that in Béranger's Dream of the First Napoleon at St. Helena, reviewing the buried forms from Austerlitz or Borodino, horses and men, trumpets and eagles, all phantom delusions, vanishing as the eternal dawn returned,—might have seemed incredible except to one who knew the immortality of malice,—that for a moment Dr. Johnson supposed himself seated on the tribunal in the character of judge, and that Milton was in fancy placed before him at the bar,—

"Quem si non aliquâ nocuisset, mortuus esset."

RICHARD BENTLEY[1]

PART I

MANY years ago, walking in the sequestered valleys of Cumberland with an eminent author[2] of the present day, we came to a long and desolate sort of gallery, through a wilderness of rocks, which, after rising and narrowing for about two miles, suddenly opened right and left into a little pastoral recess, within the very heart of the highest mountains. This verdant circus presented in its centre a beautiful but tiny lake, locally called a *tarn*,[3] with a wild brook issuing from it

[1] This long and scholarly paper, the most elaborate of all De Quincey's efforts of the strictly biographical kind, and a really important contribution to English biographical literature, appeared originally in the form of two successive articles in *Blackwood's Magazine* for September and October 1830, in the guise of a review of a "Life of Richard Bentley, D.D., by J. H. Monk, D.D.," then just published. Dr. Monk was soon afterwards Bishop of Gloucester. De Quincey revised the paper in 1857 for vol. vii. of his collected writings, as usual making some changes. These consist chiefly of added sentences and footnotes.—M.

[2] "*Eminent author*" :—Viz. who? On second thoughts, there is no call for secrecy; and therefore, in this third edition, I abjure it. The eminent author was Robert Southey; the beautiful but litigious solitude (a valley to which the only road, far from descending, as in making for a valley it should have done, slowly ascended for miles) was *Watenlath,* six miles from Keswick, and three from the foot of Lodore Waterfall.

[3] "*Tarn*" :—Any small lake among mountains much above the level of the larger lakes, and fed, not (as *they* are) by one main stream, but by a number of petty rills trickling down the side of the surround-

through the road by which we had approached, a few quiet fields upon the margin of the lake, solemn hills looking down upon it from every side; and, finally, a hamlet of seven cottages clustering together, as if for mutual support, in this lovely, but still awful, solitude. A solitude, indeed, so perfect I had never seen; nor had I supposed it possible that, in the midst of populous England, any little brotherhood of households could pitch their tents so far aloof from human society, from its endless tumults, and (one might hope) from its angry passions. Though a valley, and fenced by barriers verdant indeed, but almost insuperable, this little chamber in the hills was yet far above the ordinary elevation of inhabited ground; road there was none, except the rude sort of sheep-track by which we had come; the nearest town, and that a small one, was at six miles' distance; and here, if anywhere, it seemed possible that a world-wearied man should find a perfect rest. "Yes," said our distinguished guide, who had guessed our thoughts—"yes, nature has done *her* part to create in this place an absolute and perpetual Sabbath. And, doubtless, you conceive that, in those low-roofed dwellings her intentions are accomplished. Be undeceived then: lawsuits, and the passions of lawsuits, have carried fierce dissension into this hidden paradise of the hills; and it is a fact that not one of those seven households will now speak to any one of the other six. I turned away at these words with a pang of misanthropy, and for one moment assented to the King of Brobdingnag—that men are "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

ing hills: from the Danish *taaren*, a *trickling*. The original word is *taar*, Danish for a *tear*. Consequently the notion under which a tarn has been regarded is that of a *weeping* from the surrounding cliffs; and this is faithful to that differential feature which I have indicated as distinguishing the tarn from the lake—viz. that the latter is the discharge from a permanent river (or possibly brook), whilst the tarn is simply a rocky basin, into which from its cincture of rocky walls are continually weeping down the rains that wash them for ever. Lakers! be thankful to me for solving a question which has hitherto eluded all conjectures. The Danes had a settlement, and have left deep impressions of their language, in its old Icelandic form, amongst the lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland. The names of the mountains are generally Danish.

Something of the same sentiment accompanied us at intervals through this "Life of Bentley" and the records which it involves of Cambridge. Where upon this earth shall peace be found, if not within the cloistral solitudes of Oxford and Cambridge? Cities of Corinthian beauty and luxury; with endowments and patronage beyond the revenues of considerable nations; in libraries, in pictures, in cathedrals, surpassing the kings of the earth; and with the resources of capital cities combining the deep tranquillity of sylvan villages;—places so favoured by time, accident, and law, approach the creations of romance more nearly than any other known realities of Christendom. Yet in these privileged haunts of meditation, hallowed by the footsteps of Bacon and Milton, still echoing to those of Isaac Barrow and Isaac Newton, did the leading society of Cambridge, with that man at their head who, for scholarship, was confessedly "the foremost man of all this world," through a period of forty years fight and struggle with so deadly an *acharnement*; sacrificed their time, energy, fortune, personal liberty, and conscience, to the prosecution of their immortal hatreds; vexed the very altars with their fierce dissensions; and went to their graves so perfectly unreconciled that, had the classical usage of funeral *cremation* been restored, we might have looked for the old miracle of the Theban Brothers, and expected the very flames which consumed the hostile bodies to revolt asunder and violently refuse to mingle.[1] Some of the combatants were young men at the beginning of the quarrel; they were grey-headed, palsied, withered, doting, before it ended. Some had outlived all distinct memory, except of their imperishable hatreds. Many died during its progress; and sometimes their deaths, by disturbing the

[1] On the expulsion of Œdipus from the throne of the Grecian Thebes, his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, succeeded him, under an agreement to reign alternately. Once, however, in possession, the scoundrel Eteocles ignored the compact. His defrauded brother sought military aid, and, by the potent favour of his father-in-law Adrastus, assembled seven armies—one against each of the seven Theban gates. But finally the quarrel was settled by a duel between the two brothers. Both perished. And such was their reciprocal hatred that, on the common funeral-pyre where the two corpses were placed, even the flames parted asunder to the right and the left, refusing to ascend together.

equilibrium of the factions, had the effect of kindling into fiercer activity those rabid passions which, in a Christian community, they should naturally have disarmed or soothed.

Of feuds so deadly, so enduring, and which continue to interest at the distance of a hundred and forty years, everybody will desire to know who, in a criminal sense, was the author. The usual way of settling such questions is to say that there were "faults on both sides"—which, however, is not always the case; nor, when it is, are the faults always equal. The Bishop of Gloucester, who gives the fullest materials yet published for a just decision, leaves us to collect it for ourselves. Meantime, I suspect that his general award would be against Bentley; for, though disposed to be equitable, he is by no means indulgent to his hero; and he certainly thinks too highly of Colbatch, the most persevering of all Bentley's enemies, and a malicious old toad. If that, however, be Dr. Monk's leaning, there are others (with avenues, perhaps as good, to secret information) whose bias was the other way. In particular, I find Dr. Parr, about forty years after Bentley's death, expressing his opinion thus to Dr. Charles Burney: "I received great entertainment from your account of our Aristarchus; it is well written and well directed; for, in spite of vulgar prejudice, Bentley was eminently right, and the College infamously wrong." (Dr. Parr's Works, vol. vii. p. 389.) My own belief sets in stormily towards the same conclusion. But, even if not, I would propose that at this time of day Bentley should be pronounced right, and his enemies utterly in the wrong. Whilst living, indeed, or whilst surviving in the persons of his friends and relations, the meanest of little rascals has a right to rigorous justice. But, when he and his are all bundled off to Hades, it is far better, and more considerate to the feelings of us public, that a little dog should be sacrificed than a great one; for by this means the current of one's sympathy with an illustrious man is cleared of ugly obstructions, and enabled to flow unbroken, which might else be unpleasantly distracted between his talents, on the one hand, and his knavery, on the other. And one general remark I must make upon the *conduct* of this endless feud, no matter who began it, which will show Bentley's title to the benefit

of the rule I have proposed. People not nice in discriminating are apt to confound all the parties to a feud under one undistinguishing sentence of reproach; and, whatever difference they are compelled to allow in the *objective* features of a quarrel (*i.e.* its grounds), yet in all the *subjective* features (temper, charity, candour) they see none at all. But, in fact, between Bentley and his antagonists the differences were vital. Bentley had a good heart; generally speaking, his antagonists had not. Bentley was overbearing, impatient of opposition, domineering, sometimes tyrannical. He had, and deservedly, a very lofty opinion of himself; he either had, or affected, too mean a one of his antagonists. *Sume superbiam quæsitam meritis* was the motto which he avowed. Coming to the government of a very important college, at a time when its discipline had been greatly relaxed and the abuses were many, his reforms (of which some have been retained even to this day) were pushed with too high a hand; he was too negligent of any particular statute that stood in his way; showed too harsh a disregard to the feelings of gentlemen; and too openly disdained the arts of conciliation. Yet this same man was placable in the highest degree; was generous; needed not to be conciliated by sycophantic arts; and, at the first moment when his enemies would make an opening for him to be so, was full of forgiveness. His literary quarrels, which have left the impression that he was irritable or jealous, were (without one exception) upon *his* part mere retorts to the most insufferable provocations; and, though it is true that, when once teased into rousing himself out of his lair, he *did* treat his man with rough play, left him ugly remembrances of his leonine power, and made himself merry with his distressed condition, yet, on the other hand, in his utmost wrath, there was not a particle of malice. How should there? As a scholar, Bentley had that happy exemption from jealousy which belongs *almost* inevitably to conscious power in its highest mode. Reposing calmly on his own supremacy, he was content that pretenders of every size and sort should flutter through their little day, and be carried as far beyond their natural place as the intrigues of friends or the caprice of the public could effect. Unmolested, he was sure never to molest. Some people have a "letch" for

unmasking impostors, or for avenging the wrongs of others. Porson, for example—what fiend of mischief drove him to intermeddle with Mr. Archdeacon Travis? How Quixotic again in appearance—how mean in its real motive—was Dr. Parr's defence of Leland and Jortin,—or, to call it by its true name, Dr. Parr's attack upon Bishop Hurd! But Bentley had no touch of this temper. When instances of spurious pretensions came in his way, he smiled grimly and good-naturedly in private, but forbore (sometimes after a world of provocations) to unmask them to the public.[1]

Some of his most bitter assailants, as Kerr, and Johnson of Nottingham, he has not so much as mentioned; and it remains a problem to this day whether, in his wise love of peace, he forbore to disturb his own equanimity by reading the criticisms of a malignant enemy, or, having read them, generously refused to crush the insulter. Either way, the magnanimity was equal—for a man of weak irritability is as little able to abstain from hearkening after libels upon himself as he is from retorting them. Early in life ("Epist. ad Mill.") Bentley had declared, "*Non nostrum est κειμένοις ἐπεμβαίνειν*" ("*It is no practice of mine to trample upon the*

[1] Take, for instance, his conduct to Barnes, the Cambridge Professor of Greek. Bentley well knew that Barnes was an indifferent scholar, whose ponderous erudition was illuminated by neither accuracy of distinction nor elegance of choice. Yet Barnes spoke of himself in the most inflated terms, as though he had been the very Laureate of the Greek muses; and, not content with these harmless vaunts, scattered in conversation the most pointed affronts to Bentley, as the man under whose superiority he secretly groaned. All this Bentley refused to hear; praised him whenever he had an opportunity, even after Barnes intruded himself into the Phalaris dispute; and did him effectual services. At length Barnes published his Homer, and there shot his final arrow against Bentley, not indeed by name, but taking care to guide it to his mark by words scattered in all companies. Bentley was now roused to put an end to this petty molestation. But how? He wrote a most masterly examination of a few passages in the new edition; addressed it as a confidential letter to Dr. Davies, a common friend, desiring him to show it to the professor, by way of convincing him how easy a task such a critic would find it to ruin the character of the book, and thus appealing to his prudence for a cessation of insults; but at the same time assuring Dr. Davies that he would on no account offer any public disparagement to a book upon which Barnes had risked a little fortune. Could a more generous way have been devised for repelling public insults?

prostrate"); and his whole career in literature reflected a commentary upon that maxim. To concede was to disarm him. How opposite the temper of his enemies! One and all, they were cursed with bad tempers and unforgiving hearts. Cunningham,[1] James Gronovius, and Johnson, Conyers Middleton,[2] and Colbatch, all lost their peace of mind,

[1] With respect to this elegant and acute scholar, the most formidable of Bentley's literary opponents, the following remarkable statement is made by Dr. Monk (p. 461):—"Between Alexander Cunningham, the historian, and Alexander Cunningham, the editor of Horace, there are so many particulars of resemblance that Thompson, the translator of the history, was forced, after a minute inquiry, to remain in suspense whether or not they were the same individual. It appears that they were both Scotchmen, had both been travelling tutors, both resided at the Hague, both at the same period, both were intimate with certain distinguished public characters, both were eminent chess-players, both accomplished scholars, and both lived to an advanced age. These and *many other* coincidences long baffled all inquiry respecting the identity or diversity of the two namesakes: and it has, I believe, but recently been ascertained beyond a doubt that the critic died at the Hague in 1730, and the historian died in London in 1737."—How truly disgusting that they would not die at the same time and place! For in that case the confusion or false identity of the two men would have been permanent and inextricable. As it is, I understand from a learned Scottish friend that, in certain papers which he communicated some years ago to Dr. Irving for his Life of Buchanan, and which doubtless will there be found, this curious case of Doppelganger is fully cleared up.—This was written about seven-and-twenty years ago; and the whole case has had time to slip away from my remembrance. But "the learned Scottish friend" must have been Sir William Hamilton: for he was an inexhaustible fountain of interesting literary *memorabilia*. Yet, on the other hand, it is remarkable that Sir William had for many years ceased to hold any friendly intercourse with Dr. Irving, being most justly incensed by his obstinate mismanagement of the Advocates' Library. Sir William was early in life one amongst the official "curators" of that great national institution.

[2] This celebrated man was the most malignant of a malignant crew. In his Review of Bentley's Proposals for Editing the Greek Text of the Greek Testament, he stings like a serpent,—more rancorous party pamphlets never were written. He hated Waterland with the same perfect malignity; and his letters to Warburton, published in a quarto collection of his Miscellaneous Tracts, show that he could combine the part of sycophant, upon occasion, with that of assassin-like lampooner. It is, therefore, no unacceptable retribution in the eyes of those who honour the memory of Dan. Waterland and Bentley, men worth a hecatomb of Middletons, that the reputation of this venomous writer

all made shipwreck of their charity, during the progress of this dispute; some of them for life. But from Bentley, whether wrong or right as to the *materia litis*, the manner of conducting it drew into light no qualities but those which did him honour: great energy; admirable resources and presence of mind; the skill and address of a first-rate lawyer: and courage nearly unparalleled under the most disastrous turns of the case; those turns, even, which on two memorable occasions (the deprivation of his degrees, and his ejection from the mastership of Trinity College) seemed to have consigned him to ruin. In the very uttermost hurly-burly of the storm, it is not upon record that Bentley's cheerfulness forsook him for a day. At a time when Colbatch and Middleton were standing before judges as convicted delinquents, absconding from arrests, surrendering to jailers, sneaking to great men's levees, or making abject interest for the reversion of some hollow courtier's smile, Bentley was calmly pursuing his studies in the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, which was at once his fortress and his hermitage; sat on unconcernedly even after public officers were appointed to pull him out; and never allowed the good-humour of his happy fireside to be disturbed by the quarrels which raved outside. He probably watched the proceedings of "the enemy" with the same degree of interest with which we all read the newspapers during a foreign war: and the whole of the mighty process, which the bad passions of the other faction made gall and wormwood *to them*, to him appears to have given no more than the pleasurable excitement of a game at backgammon.

Having thus bespoke the favourable opinion of my readers for Dr. Bentley, and attempted to give that friendly bias to

is now decaying,—upon a belief *at last* thoroughly established that in two at least, and those two the most learned, of his works, he was an extensive plagiarist. This detection first threw light upon a little anecdote often related by Mr. Prebendary Lowth, brother to Bishop Lowth. Just before the publication of the "Life of Cicero," Lowth happened to be with Middleton. A gentleman came in, and abruptly asked him if he had read the works of a Scottish writer, not so well known as he deserved to be—viz. Bellenden—belonging to the court of Charles I. Middleton *turned pale, faltered*, and acknowledged that he had. The whole scene was a mystery to Lowth. Parr's Preface to Bellendenus made all clear. So much for Conyers Middleton!

the judgments upon his conduct which the mere statement of the circumstances might not always suggest, I shall draw up a rapid sketch of his life, reserving an ampler scale of analysis for the Phalaris controversy and the College quarrel, as the two capital events which served to diversify a passage through this world else unusually tranquil, fortunate, and uniform.

Richard Bentley was born on the 27th of January 1662, at Oulton, not far from Wakefield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Between his grandson, the celebrated Mr. Cumberland, and his present biographer, there is a difference as to the standing of his parents. Cumberland labours to elevate the family to a station of rank and consideration, for which he receives stern moral rebukes from Dr. Monk, who pronounces them to have belonged to "the higher description of English yeomen," and thinks it more honourable to Bentley "to have raised himself from obscurity by the force of genius and merit" than "to have been born of gentle blood." Dr. Monk lays down the orthodox morality on this subject, in a way not at all surpassed by the copy-head of any possible writing-master: but the two cases contrasted by his lordship stand in no real opposition. For a man with Bentley's object, low birth is not otherwise an obstacle to success in England than as the poverty which it generally presumes may chance to exclude him from the universities. Once there, he will find that the popular provisions of those great bodies insure the fullest benefit to any real merit he may possess; and without *that* even noble blood would have failed in procuring those distinctions which Bentley obtained. Besides, for Dr. Monk's purpose, Bentley was not *low enough* —his friends being, at any rate, in a condition to send him to college. The zeal of Cumberland, therefore, I think rightly directed. And, after all, since the question is not which sort of parentage would be the most creditable to Bentley, but which answers best to the facts, I incline to Cumberland's view, not only as better directed in the character of its ambition, but also as better grounded in its facts. Finding it made out that, during the Parliamentary War, Bentley's family adhered to the royal cause, and that of his two grandfathers both held commissions in the Cavalier

army—one as a captain, and the other as a major—I must think it probable that they belonged to the *armigerous* part of the population, and were entitled to write themselves Esquire in any bill, quittance, &c., whatsoever. On the paternal side, however, the family was impoverished by its loyalty.

From his mother, who was much younger than his father, Bentley learned the rudiments of Latin grammar. He was afterwards sent to the Grammar School of Wakefield; and, upon the death of his father, Bentley (then thirteen years old) was transferred to the care of his maternal grandfather, who resolved to send him to college. This design he soon carried into effect; and in the summer of 1676, at what would now be thought too early an age by three years at the least, Bentley was matriculated at St. John's College, Cambridge. Of his studies at college nothing further is recorded than that he applied himself even thus early to the *res metrica;* and amongst his familiar companions the only one mentioned of any distinction is the prodigious William Wotton. Of this monster in the annals of premature erudition I remember to have seen several accounts; amongst others, a pretty good one in Birch's "Life of Tillotson." But Dr. Monk mentions some facts which are there overlooked: for instance, that at six years of age he read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, together with *some* Arabic and Syriac; *some* observe, not too much, I will answer for it. In his tenth year he entered at Catherine Hall in Cambridge; on which occasion he was matriculated by the head of that college as *Gulielmus Wotton infra decem annos nec Hammondo nec Grotio secundus.* As this could be true only with a limited reference to languages, the entry seems childish and precipitate. At thirteen, being then master of twelve languages, and his proficiency in several of these attested by undoubted judges, he took his degree of B.A., an honour for which there was no precedent. It is evident, however, from Wotton's case, that attainments of this kind are found generally (as Butler says of Hebrew in particular) "to flourish best in barren ground." Dr. Monk, indeed, seems to think that Wotton did not afterwards belie the splendour of his promise. I cannot agree with him. Surely his book

on "Ancient and Modern Learning," the most popular of his works, though necessarily entertaining from its subject, is superficial in a degree scarcely to be explained in one of so much reading, and commanding so much powerful assistance. Another of his works, a History of the Roman Empire, written expressly for the Duke of Gloucester, then heir apparent,[1] has no conspicuous merit of any kind, either of popular elegance on the one hand, or of learned research on the other. In fact, Wotton's position in the world of letters was most unfortunate. With accomplishments that were worth little except for show, he had no stage on which to exhibit them; and, sighing for display, he found himself confounded in the general estimate with the obscure drudges of the age. How much more useful, and finally how much more brilliant, to have possessed his friend Bentley's exquisite skill in one or two languages than a shallow mediocrity in a score!

Bentley took his first degree with distinction, his place in the arrangement of honours corresponding with that of *third wrangler* in the present system. Having now closed his education, he was left to speculate on the best way of applying it to his advancement in life. From a fellowship in his own college, the most obvious resource of a young scholar, he was unfortunately excluded by a by-law, not rescinded until the reign of George IV. At length, after two years' interval, spent (as Dr. Monk supposes) at Cambridge, he was appointed by his college to the head mastership of the Spalding Grammar School. This situation, after holding it about a year, he quitted for the very enviable one of domestic tutor to the son of Stillingfleet, then Dean of St. Paul's. For this also he was indebted to the influence of his college: and perhaps no sort of preferment could have been more favourable to Bentley's views. Stillingfleet was a truly good man; a most extensive and philosophic scholar; a gentleman, and acquainted with

[1] His Royal Highness was the last child of Queen Anne; who "*touched*," of course, for scrofula, and suffered herself to heal myriads of her subjects, but could not heal her own children. All died; and finally, in his eleventh year, died the Duke. Else we might perhaps have needed no Hanoverians.

courts; and with a liberal allowance of the claims of a tutor, having himself officiated in that character. Another great advantage of the place was the fine library belonging to the dean, which, excepting the celebrated ones of Moore, Bishop of Ely, and of Isaac Vossius, was perhaps the best private collection in the kingdom. It was besides a library of that particular composition which suited Bentley's pursuits; and in the dean's conversation he had the very best directions for using it to advantage. Meantime, with this ample provision for intellectual wants, worldly ones were not likely to be overlooked. How possible it was at that day for a private tutor to reap nothing from the very highest connexions was seen in the case of Dr. Colbatch, one of Bentley's future enemies. This man had held that situation successively in the families of Bishop Burnet and of the proud Duke of Somerset; and yet neither from the intriguing bishop, though all-powerful with Queen Mary, nor from the proud duke, though chancellor of his university, could he obtain any preferment. But Stillingfleet loved real merit; and, fortunately for Bentley, in the next reign, being raised to the mitre, possessed the ear of royalty beyond any ecclesiastical person of his own time.

It was in this fortunate situation that Bentley acquired that biblical learning which afterwards entitled him to the Divinity Professorship, and which warranted his proposals for a revised text of the New Testament, even after that of his friend Mill. About six years being spent in this good man's family, most delightfully no doubt to himself—and then chiefly laying the foundations, broad and deep, of his stupendous learning—Bentley removed with his pupil early in 1689 to Oxford. Wadham College was the one selected; and both pupil and tutor became members of it. Stillingfleet was now raised to the see of Worcester; and from his extensive connexions Bentley had the most useful introductions in every quarter. In particular, he had the privilege of disporting himself, like Leviathan, in the ocean of the Bodleian Library: and it is certainly not going too far to say that no man ever entered those sacred galleries so well qualified to make a general use of their riches. Of his classical accomplishments it were needless to speak. Mathe-

matics, it is thought, by Dr. Monk, that he studied at Cambridge; and it is certain that in Dean Stillingfleet's family he had, by a most laborious process of study, made himself an eminent master of the Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac.

Dealing much in cattle, a man's talk is of oxen; and, living in this Eldorado of books, it was natural that a man should think of writing one. Golden schemes floated in Bentley's mind; for he was a golden scholar, and these were the golden hours of his early manhood. Amongst other works, he projected at this period an entire edition of the Fragments of the Greek Poets, and also a Corpus of the Greek Lexicographers (Hesychius, Suidas, Pollux, &c.). To the irreparable loss of Grecian literature, neither scheme was accomplished. Already in his "Epist. ad Mill." he speaks of the first as abandoned,—"*Sed hæc fuerunt*" is the emphatic expression. It was in the fates that Bentley's maiden performance as an author should be in other and more obscure society. Amongst the manuscript riches of the Bodleian there was a copy—the one sole [1] copy in this world—of a certain old chronicler, about whose very name there has been a considerable amount of learned dust kicked up. Properly speaking, he ought to be called *Joannes Malĕlas Antiochenus:* but, if you are not particular about your Greek, you may call him *Malela*, without an *s*. This old gentleman, a fellow of infinite dulness, wrote a chronicle beginning with Adam, and coming down to the 35th year of Justinian. And here lies the necessity of calling him either *Malela* or *Malelas;* for, strange to say, as there were two Alexander Cunninghams, who at this very time were going about the world mere echoes or mocking-birds of each

[1] By the way, it should be borne in mind that, over and above the translations which yet survive into the Arabic (a resource obviously of little hope, except in the case of scientific books), there are first and last four avenues by which we may have a chance for recovering any of the lost classics: 1. The Palimpsests, as in repeated instances of late in the Ambrosian Library at Milan; 2. The Pompeii MSS. (for the sensible way of dealing with which see a letter of Lord Holland to Dr. Parr); 3. *The great chests of Greek MSS. in the Sultan's Library at Constantinople*, packed up ever since the triumph of the Crescent in 1453; and, finally, the MSS. lurking in the Christian monasteries of Mount Athos.

other, so there were two Johns, both of Antioch, both chroniclers, both asses (no distinction there), and both choosing to start from Adam. The publication of this chronicle had been twice meditated before, but interrupted by accidents. At length, in 1690, it was resumed under the superintendence of Mill, who claimed from Bentley a promise he had made to throw together any notes which might occur to him upon the proof-sheets, as they came reeking from the press. These notes took the shape of an "Epistola ad Millium": and thus the worthy old jackass of Antioch had the honour of coming forth to the world with the notes of Chilmead (one of the two early projectors of an edition), *Prolegomena* by Hody, a learned chaplain of Bishop Stillingfleet's, and with this very masterly collection of disquisitions by Bentley upon topics[1] either closely connected with the work or remotely suggested by it.

[1] Amongst these is the name *Malelas*, which Hody disputed, contending for *Malela*. Bentley replies by arguing the case on two assumptions:—1. *That the names were Greek.* Here the sum of his pleading is this—that naturally the Latin language had no such termination as that of *as* with a parisyllabic genitive; that, in compliance with this original structure, all Greek names in *as* were in early Latin rendered *a*; and that this conformity to the popular idiom might be looked for the more certainly, as the situation of the usage was one which appealed to the populace: whence it is that, in the *comic* drama of Rome, we meet with Phædria, Chæria, Sosia, &c., to so great an extent. But, in proportion as literature prevailed, a practice arose of giving to Greek names in *as* their real Greek termination, without any Roman deflexion. Hence even Varro, though somewhat of an antiquarian bigot in old Romanisms, has Archytas, Athenagoras, &c.; and Cicero is overrun with such names. One exception, however, in even Cicero's usage, is alleged upon the authority of Quintilian, viz. *Hermagora*. "Ego vero," says Bentley, "Ciceronem ita scripsisse ne ipsi quidem Ciceroni affirmanti crediderim": "But for *my* part that Cicero had so written the name, I would not concede as a credibility even to Cicero himself insisting on it to my face." And certainly the hiatus of *Hermagora inventor* makes it probable that Cicero wrote "Hermagoras." Bentley grants, however, that Cicero wrote "Phania Appii libertus"; but why? Because names of slaves, being household words, naturally followed the mother idiom, and not the learned idiom of books. 2. Let it be assumed *that the name is not Greek, but Barbarous*, like that of ὁ Σισάρα in the Old Testament, ὁ Ζαρὰ in the New. Bentley argues the case on this footing. "But this," says he, "I marvel at, 'quod, ut de Græco nomine cognitio habeatur, ad barbaras nationes provocant'"—("that, although the judicial investigation we

Here, by the way, I have a crow to pluck with Dr. Monk. How he came to make so monstrous and laughable a mistake I know not. *Primâ facie*, one would suppose he had not read the work; but this is impossible, for he states very well the substance of the most important discussions in the epistle: yet certainly in the following sentence he prefers a charge against Bentley which is altogether without foundation:—"In addressing his learned correspondent," says Dr. Monk, "he is not satisfied with marking their intimacy by the terms φίλη κεφαλή, *Milli jucundissime, suavissime*, &c.; but in one place he accosts him ὦ 'Ιωαννίδιον—an indecorum which neither the familiarity of friendship, nor the license of a dead language, can justify towards the dignified head of a house." Certainly Dr. Monk *aliud agebat* ("*was attending to something else*") when he wrote this censure, which at any rate from him, who elsewhere attempts to cheapen the dignity of academic heads, would come with a peculiar want of grace. The case is this:—From a long digression, which Bentley confesses to be too discursive, he suddenly recalls himself to the old chronicler—*Sed ad Antiochensem redeo* (p. 486 of Lennep's republication); and then, upon an occasion of an allusion to Euripides, he goes on to expose some laughable blunders of Malelas. One of these is worth mentioning: the passage,

> "Ἥκουσιν εἰς γῆν κυανεᾶν Συμπληγάδων
> Πέτραν φυγόντες" [1]—

it seems, the old boy had so construed as to make κυανεᾶν not a genitive but an accusative, and thus had made a pre-

are holding concerns a Greek name, yet the appeal is made to barbarians"). "However, no matter," says he; "as they choose to take the Huns for umpires, to the Huns we will go." And he then shows that the name of *Attila* became in Greek always ὁ 'Αττιλᾶς. Yet here, again, he makes a subtle distinction. The ancient patriarchal names of the Old Testament, 'Ιακώβ, 'Ιωσήφ, Σαούλ, &c., are retained in Greek unmodified. But the very same names, borne by modern persons, become 'Ιάκωβος, 'Ιώσηπος, Σαῦλος, &c. Upon that analogy, also, semi-barbarous names in *a* as Abdalla, Mustapha, Juba, &c., which, had they been ancient, would have retained their final *a*, being modern, all become *as* in Greek. Such is the outline of the refinements in this piece of learned special pleading, which is universally allowed to have settled the question.

[1] An emendation of Bentley's for Πλάτη φυγόντες.

sent to geography of the yet undiscovered country of the Cyanean land. Upon this, and a previous discovery of a "*Scythian*[1] *Aulis*," by the sharp-sighted man of Antioch, Bentley makes himself merry; rates the geographers for their oversights; and, clapping *old Malelas* on the back, he thus apostrophises him—"Euge vero, ὦ Ἰωαννίδιον; profecto aptus natus es ad omnia abdita et retrusa contemplanda!" ("*Well done, little Johnny! you are the boy for seeing through a millstone!*"). Manifestly, then, the I. M. that he is here addressing is not his correspondent John Mill, but the subject of his review, John Malelas, the absurd old donkey of Antioch. This passage, therefore, in mere prudence, Dr. Monk will cancel in his next edition: in fact, I cannot conceive how such a mistake has arisen with a man of his learning.

I must also very frankly state my disagreement with Dr. Monk upon the style (meaning the temper) of this epistle. He charges it with "flippancy," and thinks some of the expressions "boastful." I have lately read it carefully with a view to these censures; and I cannot find any foundation for them in a single instance. *Se faire valoir* (to make himself of some account) is peculiarly the right of a young man on making his *début*. The mere history of the case obliges Bentley sometimes to make known the failure of Isaac Casaubon, suppose, of Vossius, or of Gataker, where he had himself brilliantly succeeded. And, supposing that the first of these heroes had declared a corruption desperate which Bentley restored with two strokes of his pen, was it altogether a point of duty for him to dissemble his triumph? Mere criticism, and a page covered with Greek, do not of themselves proclaim the pretensions of a scholar. It was almost necessary for Bentley to settle his own rank by bringing himself into collision (consequently into comparison) with the Scaligers, father and son, with Salmasius, with Pearson. Now, had this been done with irreverence towards these great men, I should have been little disposed to say a word in his behalf. But far otherwise. In some passage or other he speaks of all the great critics with filial duty. "*Erravit*"

[1] This blunder of Jack's grew out of the confusion between the two Iphigenias of Euripides—that in Aulis, and that in Tauris. Little Johnny was thinking of Tauris, no doubt.

(says he of one) "*in re levi, gravioribus opinor studiis intentus, vir supra æmulationem nostram longissime positus.*" ("*Here upon a trivial matter our author, one raised by many degrees beyond any competition of mine, whilst too earnestly fixing his attention, I imagine, upon weightier subjects of research, has made an oversight.*") Of Pearson in like manner, at the very moment of correcting him, he said on another occasion that the very dust of his writings was gold. Æmilius Portus, indeed, he calls *Hominum futilissimus* ("the most frivolous of men"), justly incensed with him for having misled a crowd of great writers on a point of chronology. But, speaking of himself individually, he says, "*Nos pusilli homines*" ("*I, for my own part, am one of humble pretensions*"); and that is always his language when obliged to stand forward as an opponent of those by whose labours he had himself confessedly grown wise.

On this work, as Bentley's first, and that which immediately made him known to all Europe, I have thought it allowable to spend more words than I shall be able to do upon the rest. In dismissing it, however, I cannot but express a hope that some future editor will republish this and other critical essays of Bentley, with the proper accuracy and beauty: in which case, without at all disturbing the present continuity of text, which exhibits faithfully the arrangement adopted by Bentley, it will yet be easy by marginal figures and titles to indicate the true logical divisions and subdivisions of this elaborate epistle; for want of which it is at present troublesome to read.

It sometimes happens to men of extraordinary attainments that they are widely talked of before they personally came forward on the public arena. Much "buzz" is afloat about them in private circles: and, as in such cases many are always ready to aid the marvellous, some small minority on the other hand are sure to affect the sceptical. Under these circumstances, when parties have formed, and even schisms in parties, just at the most critical moment of public expectation, a first appearance is everything. If this is likely to be really splendid, it is mistaken policy, in fact, it is a profound misreading of human nature, which would deprecate the raising of great expectations. On the contrary, they

are of enormous service—pushed even to the verge of extravagance. Raised artificially even to furnace heat, they promote the real subsequent success, and make people view it as greater than it was, if that success really *is* a splendid one. Many a man is read and rated by the quality of his earliest forerunning reputation. Such a result happened to Bentley. Unfathered rumours, rumours unacknowledged and untraceable, had been wandering up and down "the circles" about an astonishing chaplain of the very learned Dr. Stillingfleet. This doctor, at that time Bishop of Worcester, was himself both good and great. To be *his* chaplain was already an ample certificate of character, which ran like the king's writ —not fearing anywhere check or repulse. And now, just in this hush of expectation, came the first augury of Bentley's qualifications, so quiet in its expression of effort, so clamorous in its expression of power, that in a moment the loudest of the antecedent trumpetings and heraldings seemed countersigned redundantly. This state of public opinion very soon notified itself to Bentley through an overt expression, which he rightly regarded down to the last day of his life as conferring the most signal of all his triumphs. It was this:— On the penultimate day of the year 1691—viz., on the 30th of December in that year—died Robert Boyle, illustrious as one of these who first broke ground as a pioneer in the great field of Natural Philosophy, and also as a loyal servant in the household of Christianity. By his last will this great man founded for ever a lecture in defence of the Christian faith against infidels ; an order of philosophers who by that time mustered in great force up and down Christendom. It was startling, besides, to Christian thinkers, that *Pondere quam numero* might be fairly assumed as a motto by these antichristian philosophers ; that if *weighed* they told more signally than if *counted ;* and that by the *quality* of their intellectual triumphs they formed a gloomier array even than by the mere numerical *quantity* of those triumphs. Amongst the *acute* intellects of Christendom, Hobbes, for instance, was somewhat of a leader ; but for subtlety and power no intellect could be named on a level with the Jew Spinosa. Such a lecture, therefore, consequently of necessity such a lecturer, as Boyle now endeavoured to raise up, formed a *championship*

on behalf of the Christian faith, such as crowned heads appoint for the defence of disputed worldly pretensions. The annual endowment was £50 for each course of lectures. But the money was nothing: the responsibility, the credit, the glory, lay in the weight and solemnity of the service. If, then, the appointment was in general a great distinction, even more so the *first* appointment. That there could have been little of hesitation in this great inaugural choice is evident by the result. Boyle died at the close of 1691; on the 19th of February 1692 Bentley was appointed to the office. The series of lectures which he preached in discharge of his duty is deservedly valued to this day—presenting as much, as various, and even as profound philosophy, as perhaps is compatible with a *popular* treatment of its peculiar themes.[1] Bentley flattered himself that after this assault the atheists "were silent, and sheltered themselves under deism." But this was imaginary. Spinosa, in particular, could not have had that influence which Bentley, Sam. Clarke, and so many others have fancied: for a "B. D S. Opera Posthuma,[2] 1677," where only his philosophic system can be found, has always been a very rare book[3]; and it was never reprinted until Professor Paulus, in our own days, published a com-

[1] Boyle's lecture, as first preached by Richard Bentley, I can venture to assure the reader, will very much amuse and instruct him; and he may often pick it up for a shilling.

[2] "*B D. S. Opera Posthuma*" is the masquerade title-page to the main body of Spinosa's works. The meaning is, Benedicti de Spinosa (not Benedicti Spinosæ, as I have heard that some bibliographers imagine) Opera Posthuma. The volume, a quarto, was published in 1677, being the year after Spinosa's sudden death. The object in thus disguising the authorship of the book was to evade the scoundrel bigots who would else have smoked the purport of the book, and would then assuredly have hounded on the intolerant magistrates still scattered through Holland to smoke it in another sense—viz. in the centre of a tar-barrel, which was a thing standing idle by crowds on the quay of Amsterdam, &c., and which, if no longer good for the philosopher, as one already past burning, was excellent when applied as a Burkian mouth-plaster to his philosophy.

[3] *How* rare is evident from this, that at a great book sale in London, which had congregated all the *Fancy*, on a copy occurring, not one of the company but myself knew what the mystical title-page meant. Oh, reader, I was proud (be you assured) for at least three minutes; for so long a period I was worshipped as a Delphic oracle.

plete edition of Spinosa's works. Bayle, it is true, gave some account of the philosophy, but a most absurd, and, besides, a contemptuous one. In fact, Bayle — spite of the esteem in which his acuteness was held by Warburton, and even by Leibnitz—must be now classed as a spirited *litterateur* rather than philosopher. Hobbists, however, we may believe Bentley, there were in abundance: but they were a weak cattle; and on Bentley's particular line of argument even their master hardly knew his own mind.

The lectures were triumphant. They strengthened the public opinion of Bentley's talent, and exhibited him in a character more intimately connected than works of mere erudition with his sacred calling. Once only they were attacked from a quarter of authority. Dr. Monk, it appears to me, undervalues the force of the attack, and, perhaps unduly, ascribes it to an impulse of party zeal. Keill, a Scotchman of talent, whose excellent lectures on Natural Philosophy are still quoted as a text-book in Germany, was led (and, my impression is, led naturally), in his examination of Burnet's "Theory of the Earth," to notice two errors of Bentley; one of which, as Dr. Monk puts it more on the footing of a verbal ambiguity than my impression of it would have warranted, I will not insist on. The other, unless my memory greatly deceives me, was this:—Bentley, having heard that the moon always presents the same face to our earth, so that there is one hemisphere of our moon, *or nearly so*, which none of us ever *did* see, or ever *will* see, inferred from that fact that she had no revolution upon her own axis; upon which Keill told him that the fact he stated was a ground for the very opposite inference, since the tendency of the moon's motion about the earth to bring a different face before us could not possibly be counteracted but by a coincident revolution on her own axis. Keill was a coarse man, who called a spade a spade, and apparently meant by nature for a very scientific butcher; instead of which he chose to make himself a butcherly man of science, as was afterwards sufficiently shown in his almost brutal treatment of Leibnitz on behalf of Sir Isaac Newton, Keill's idolised friend. And it is possible, undoubtedly, that, being a professor at Oxford, Keill might have conceived some personal pique to Bentley

while resident in that university. But I really see no reason for ascribing to any ungenerous motive a criticism which, though peevishly worded, was certainly called for by the conspicuous situation of the error which it exposed.

In this year, Bentley was appointed a prebendary at Worcester, and in April 1694 keeper of all the king's libraries. During the same year, he was a second time summoned to preach the Boyle lecture; and in the following year was made one of the chaplains in ordinary to the king.

Early in the year 1696, Bentley quitted the town-house of the Bishop of Worcester, and commenced housekeeping in his own lodgings as royal librarian. These lodgings, had he reaped nothing else from his office, were to him, when resident in London, a royal preferment. They were in St. James's Palace, adjoining to those of the Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne, and looked into the Park. In this year Bentley took the degree of Doctor of Divinity; and somewhere about the same time appeared the edition of Callimachus by his friend Græviu s, with contributions from himself, of memorable splendour.

In 1697 commenced, on Bentley's part, that famous controversy about the "Epistles of Phalaris" which has chiefly conferred immortality on his name. The circumstances in which it originated are briefly these:—The well-known dispute in France upon the intellectual pretensions, in a comparison with each other, of the ancients and moderns, had been transferred to England by Sir William Temple, the accomplished progenitor of our present minister, Lord Palmerston. This writer, just then at the height of his popularity, had declared for the Ancients with more elegance than weight of matter; and, by way of fortifying his judgment, had alleged two separate works—viz. the "Epistles of Phalaris," and the "Fables of Æsop"—as proofs that the oldest parts of literature are also the best. Sir William was not unaware that both works had been challenged as forgeries. However, the suspicions of scholars were as yet unmatured; and, in a question of taste, which was the present shape of the dispute, Sir William Temple's opinion seemed entitled to some consideration. Accordingly, the Honourable Charles Boyle, nephew to the illustrious philosopher of that name,

who was at this time pursuing his studies at Christ Church in Oxford, and, upon the suggestion of Aldrich, the head of that college, had resolved to undertake an edition of some Greek book as an academic exercise, was directed to Phalaris in particular by this recent opinion of Sir William Temple, a friend to whom he looked up with filial confidence and veneration. That he might insure as much perfection to his edition as was easily within his reach, Boyle directed Bennet, his London publisher, to procure a collation of a MS. in the King's Library. This brought on an application to Bentley, who had just then received his appointment as librarian; and his behaviour, on this occasion, scandalously misreported by Bennet, furnished the first ground of offence to Boyle. How long a calumny can keep its ground, after the fullest refutation, appears from the preface to Lennep's Latin version of Bentley's Dissertation (edit. of 1781), where, in giving a brief history of the transaction, the writer says: "Bentleius tergiversari primum, et ægre quod sæpius efflagitatum erat concedere"; and again—"Ecce *subito* Bentleius, iter parans Londino, maxima ope contendere a Benneto ut codex ille statim redderetur"—("Bentley first of all took to shuffling, and next to granting with a very ill grace what had been repeatedly requested." "Behold, all at once, Bentley, meditating a journey from London, begins most earnestly to insist with Bennet that the MS. should be instantly returned"). All this is false. Let us here anticipate the facts as they came out on both sides some years after. Bentley, by the plainest statements, has made it evident that he gave every facility for using the MS.; that he reclaimed it only when his own necessary absence from London made it impossible to do otherwise; that this necessity was foreseen and notified at the time of lending it; and that, even on the last day of the term prefixed for the use of the MS., sufficient time for despatching the business twice over[1] was good-naturedly

[1] Bentley ascertained, by an experiment upon one-third of the MS., that, without any extraordinary diligence, it could be collated throughout in a space of four hours. Now, his first summons had been for noon, but he indulgently extended the term to "candle-light." How soon was that? The day has since been ascertained to be Saturday, May 23. But, as the year was upwards of half-a-century before the English reformation (1752) of the calendar, that day would correspond

granted by Bentley, after his first summons had been made in vain.

These facts are established. That he lent the MS. under no sort of necessity to do so, nay, at some risk to himself, is admitted by Bennet; that he reclaimed it under the highest necessity to do so is not denied by anybody. At what point of the transaction is it, then, that the parties differ? Simply as to the delay in lending, and on the matter of giving notice that on such a day it would be resumed. Some procrastination in lending, or even the neglect to give notice, would not have justified a public stigma, had either one or the other been truly imputed to Bentley. But both imputations he solemnly denied. It is painful that the stress of any case should rest upon a simple comparison of veracity between man and man; yet, as Mr. Bennet has made this inevitable, let me state the grounds of comparison between himself and Dr. Bentley. In external respectability there was, in the first place, a much greater interval between them than the same stations would imply at this day.[1] Dr. Bentley, in the next place, was never publicly convicted of a falsehood; whereas Bennet was, in this case at any rate, guilty of *one*. Thirdly, whilst the doctor had no interest at stake which required the protection of a falsehood (since, without a falsehood, he was clear of the discourtesy charged upon him), Bennet had the strongest: he had originally brought forward

to the 2d of June at present. Being, therefore, within three weeks of the longest day, we may assume that, in the latitude of London, "candle-light" could not be understood as earlier than half-past nine o'clock P.M. Allowing the collator, therefore, one hour for any other sort of collation (for instance, a beef-steak collation), he had just double the time requisite for the collation of the MS.

[1] Exactly one hundred and sixty years have passed since the day of this feud; and during that interval no classes have so much advanced in social consideration as bankers and booksellers (meaning *publishers*). The bankers of that day were goldsmiths; whence the phrase, hardly yet obsolete among elderly people, of "*bankers' shops.*" Booksellers, again, having rarely stood forward, until Pope's time, in the character of enlightened co-operators with literary men, naturally took their place amongst the mechanical agents of the press. At present, an influential publisher belongs to a *profession*, which it rests with himself to render dignified. In Bennet's time, he had not ceased to be a mere mercenary *tradesman*. After all, Gibson, the collator, has confessed in Bentley's favour.

a particular statement, in a private letter, as a cloak for his own and his collator's indolence, without any expectation that it would lead to public consequences; but now, what he had begun in policy he clung to from dire necessity; since, unless he could succeed in fastening some charge of this nature upon Dr. Bentley, his own excuse was made void, his word of honour was forfeited, and from the precipitate attack on Bentley into which he had misled his patron all colour of propriety vanished at once.

Meantime, Bennet's private account was as yet uncontradicted; and, on the faith of *that*, Boyle acquainted the public, in the preface to his edition of Phalaris, that, up to the fortieth of the letters, he had taken care to have the book collated with the King's MS., but that beyond *that* the librarian had denied him the use of it, *agreeably to his peculiar spirit of courtesy.* Upon the very first publication of the book Bentley saw it, and immediately wrote to Mr. Boyle, explaining the matter in a polite and satisfactory manner. Boyle replied in gentlemanly terms, but did not give him that substantial redress, which Bentley had reason to expect, of cancelling the leaf which contained the affront. No further steps were taken on either side for some time; nor does it certainly appear that any would have been taken, but for an accidental interference of a third party. This was Wotton, Bentley's college friend. His book on "Ancient and Modern Learning," originally published in 1694, and called out by Sir William Temple's essay on the same subject, was now (1697) going into a second edition; and, as a natural means of increasing its interest, he claimed of Bentley the fulfilment of an old promise to write a paper exposing the spurious pretensions of Phalaris and Æsop. This promise had been made before the appearance of Mr. Boyle's book, and evidently had a reference to Sir William Temple's strange judgment upon those authors. But, as matters had altered since then, Bentley endeavoured to evade a task which would oblige him to take a severe notice of Mr. Boyle's incivility and injustice. Wotton, however, held him to his engagement, and Bentley (*perhaps* reluctantly) consented. Here, again, the foreign editor of Lennep is far too rash: he says of Bentley that "*cupide occasionem amplexus est*" ("he caught eagerly at the

opportunity"). But we are not to suppose that the sincerity with which a man declines a fierce dispute is always in an inverse ratio to the energy with which he may afterwards pursue it. A keener knowledge of human nature will teach us a far different doctrine. Many a man shrinks with all his heart from a quarrel for the very reason that he feels too sensibly how surely it will rouse him to a painful activity, if he should once embark in it, and an inevitable irritation fatal to his peace. In the following year, Boyle, or the Christ Church faction that used his name, replied at length. And certainly a more amusing [1] book, upon a subject so unpromising, has rarely been written. As to learning, doubtless the joint-stock of the company made but a poor exchequer for defraying a war upon Bentley; yet it was creditable to wits and men of fashion: and in one point of view it was most happily balanced, for it was just shallow enough to prevent them from detecting their own blunders; yet, on the other hand, deep enough to give them that colourable show of being sometimes in the right which was indispensable for drawing out Bentley's knowledge. They, being a little better enlightened, would have conceived, whilst yet in time, a seasonable terror of their great antagonist. He, on the other hand, meeting with an assailant by one degree weaker than the Christ Church faction, would have felt too lofty a disdain to reply. On any such change in the proportions, the one party would not have dared to advance, nor the other condescended to pursue. Partly from the real merit of the book in those points which the public could appreciate, partly from the extensive and brilliant connexions of the writers, it was eagerly read,—a second edition was immediately demanded, and Bentley was supposed to have been defeated. He, meantime, "hushed in grim repose," was couchant; and,

[1] Hardly less amusing is the *first* Dissertation of Bentley, as published in the second edition of Wotton (but in the third edition, 1705, and all subsequent ones, omitted) This, where the heads only of the arguments are touched, without that elaborate array of learning which was afterwards found necessary, and where the whole is treated with irresistible fun and merriment, is a most captivating piece of criticism. A general reader, therefore, who is careless of the minute learning of the case, should read merely this first Dissertation and Boyle's answer.

with his eyes upon the gambols of his victims, was settling himself at leisure for his fatal spring. Spite of the public applauses, some ominous misgivings were muttered : one or two of the Boyle party began to "funk" ; they augured no good from the dead silence of Bentley ; and Boyle, in particular, who was now in Ireland, sent to Atterbury some corrections furnished by his earliest tutor, Gale, the Dean of York,—an intimation of error which Atterbury, who had been a chief contributor to the book, deeply resented. But errors or corrections were now alike past notice. Pelides was now armed for the field : the signal was given ; and at length, with the fullest benefit of final revision, which left no room for friend or foe to point out a flaw, that immortal Dissertation (*immortalis ista Dissertatio*, to speak the words of Porson) descended like a thunderbolt upon the enemy,

"And in one night
The trumpets silenced, and the plumes laid low."

In 1699, being then in his thirty-eighth year, Bentley received that main preferment which was at once his reward and his scourge for the rest of his life. At the latter end of that year, Dr. J. Montague was transferred (I refuse to say, with Dr. Monk, promoted) from the mastership of Trinity College, Cambridge,[1] to the Deanery of Durham. Learning, services to religion, and (according to one rather scandalous

[1] "*Trinity College, Cambridge*" :—The Bishop of Gloucester must have had some under-purpose of sneering to serve in this passage. And yet no : there is malice latent in a sneer ; and that is what one ought not to suspect in the episcopal heart : "Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ ?" Juno might be vindictive : but I will never believe that a bishop can be elaborately and circuitously malicious. And yet, beyond all question, a master of Trinity, who is confessedly the greatest man in Cambridge (*absente illustrissimo Cancellario*), is at least ten times as great a man as any possible Dean of Durham. The reader who is unacquainted with our two magnificent English Universities, bequeathed to us from ancient days, must understand that in Oxford the college of Christ Church takes undisputed precedency of all the rest. But in Cambridge this precedency is not so determinately settled, St. John's contesting the place of honour with Trinity. This last, however, having greatly the advantage architecturally, and in the resort of noblemen, it is acknowledged by all strangers as virtually the paramount college.

tradition [1]) the firmness which he had manifested in governing the family of Bishop Stillingfleet, all conspired to point out Bentley as a person pre-eminently eligible to this station. Accordingly he received the appointment; and on the first day of February 1700 he was solemnly installed in his office. It is evident that he rated its value somewhat differently [2] from Dr. Monk; for he refused, in after years,

[1] The story is this:—Bishop Stillingfleet is reported to have said, "We must send Bentley to rule the turbulent fellows of Trinity College. If anybody can do it, he is the person; for I am sure that he has ruled my family ever since he entered it." Upon this Dr. Monk argues that the anecdote is doubly refuted; first, by the fact that Stillingfleet had been some time dead when the vacancy occurred; secondly, because the fellows had not been turbulent before Bentley's accession to the headship. Now, a little consideration will show that the anecdote may be substantially true for all *that*, and probably was so (since it rests on too pointed and circumstantial an allusion to have been invented). Full two years before Bentley's instalment, it appears that a vacancy had been anticipated, and a canvass made, upon the rumoured appointment of Dr. Montague to the see of Worcester. That was the occasion, no doubt, of Stillingfleet's remark. Then, as to the word *turbulent*: besides that allowance must be made for the laxity of an oral story, the fellows might be riotous in another sense than that of resisting the master's authority; and throughout Dr. Montague's time, who perhaps was as riotous as they, it is pretty certain that they were so.

[2] Dr. Monk's undervaluation of college headships is so pointedly affected, and really so extravagant, that I cannot but suspect some personal pique or jealousy, how caused I pretend not to guess, as the foundation of it. Everywhere he speaks of deaneries as *of course* superior in dignity to headships, forgetting that he himself has occasion to mention one dean (a Dean of York) who looked to the mastership of Trinity as an object of ambition. And in one place he takes a flight beyond my comprehension; for, according to him, in a dispute between the head of a college and an archbishop, the parties "stand upon such unequal ground" that it is matter of astonishment to find it lasting beyond a moment. How! is it in England that we hear such language, and in 1830? Why, but the other day we had the edifying spectacle of an archbishop descending to a newspaper altercation with a mob orator, on the subject of his own money concerns! There *was* unequal ground. But, with justice on his side, I really see nothing alarming in an archdeacon and a head of a college maintaining a controversial correspondence with a prince of the blood. A master of Trinity College, Cambridge, presumptuous in disputing with an archbishop on a matter of literature and academic interest!! What false impressions would a foreigner carry away on the relations of English dignities from Dr. Monk's book! The fact is that, in popular

to exchange it for the poor Bishopric of Bristol; and, being asked by the minister what preferment he would consider worth his acceptance, wisely replied, in a sentence that might have been pointed by Diogenes, that which would leave him no reason to wish for a removal.

This appointment was made under the unanimous recommendation of an Episcopal Commission, to whom King William, better fitted for a guard-room than the civil duties of the cabinet, had delegated the disposal of all church preferment within the gift of the crown. By the public it could not but have been approved; but it was unpopular in the college, composed chiefly of indolent sots, who were not likely to anticipate with pleasure the disadvantageous terms on which they would stand with so accomplished a head. And my own conviction is that the appointment would hardly have been carried, had it not been backed by the support of the Princess Anne. Since the death of Queen Mary, whose rancorous quarrel with her sister had never been settled, even on her death-bed, the natural influence of the princess had been allowed to revive. That orthodox lady regarded with particular favour the learned champion of Christianity, and had designed that her sole surviving son, the Duke of Gloucester, should be sent, at a proper age, to the college over which so meritorious a person presided. In this scheme so much stress was laid on the personal co-operation of Bentley that, by an arrangement unheard of in English

consideration, a head of one of the smaller colleges, in either Cambridge or Oxford, is equal at the least to a dean; and the head of Christ Church in Oxford, or Trinity in Cambridge,—perhaps the heads of the single colleges which constitute the whole university in Dublin, Edinburgh, and Glasgow,—are equal to bishops. I appeal to Dr. Monk himself to say candidly which is the greater man in Oxford—the Dean of Christ Church, or the Bishop of Oxford? But Oxford is a poor bishopric. True; and *that* introduces a fresh ground of comparison. As stations of profit, sometimes the headships have the advantage (united, as they often are, with complementary livings), sometimes the bishoprics. As stations of comfort, however, they stand in no comparison. A college head in Oxford or Cambridge has the most delightful sinecure in the world; whereas bishoprics, by those who are determined to do the work of them, are found to be the most laborious situations in the whole administration of the national business. But here there are secrets. See the very opposite reports, for instance, of the see of Worcester, when held by bishops of different character.

universities, his Royal Highness was to have resided under the master's roof. But these counsels were entirely defeated by the hand of Providence, which then lay leavy upon that illustrious house : in six months after Bentley's installation, the young prince was summoned to the same premature death which had carried off all the children of his parents.

Finding himself now able to offer a suitable establishment to the woman of his heart, on the 4th of January 1701 Bentley married Mrs. (or, in modern language, Miss) Joanna Bernard, daughter of Sir John Bernard of Brampton, in the County of Huntingdon. This lady, whom he had been accustomed to meet in the family of Bishop Stillingfleet, brought him four children—two daughters and two sons—of whom one died in infancy. In her he found a most faithful companion through the storms of his after life ; and, as her family connexions were of considerable distinction, and two years afterwards emerged into a blaze of court favour, she had the happiness of giving a powerful assistance to her husband at a moment of imminent danger. There is a story current that during his courtship Bentley had nearly forfeited her favour by speaking sceptically of the Book of Daniel [1]—a story resting, it seems, on the slight authority of "wicked [2]

[1] "*Book of Daniel*" :—Things alter strangely in the course of a century. At present the most orthodox people make no secret of viewing Daniel as far too precise and punctilious in historic circumstantiality to be admissible as a prophet, who should naturally wrap himself in mighty shadows. Dr. Arnold of Rugby, notoriously a pious (and, generally speaking, an orthodox) man, was one of those who did not receive Daniel as a prophet.

[2] This epithet, bestowed playfully upon Whiston by Swift, in ridicule of his sanctimony, would almost seem to have been seriously justified by his general bad faith in scattering injurious anecdotes about everybody who refused to fall in with his follies. His excuse lies in the extreme weakness of his brain. Think of a man, who had brilliant preferment within his reach, dragging his poor wife and daughter for half-a-century through the very mire of despondency and destitution, because he disapproved of Athanasius, or because the "Shepherd of Hermas" was not sufficiently esteemed by the Church of England ! Unhappy is that family over which a fool presides. The secret of all Whiston's lunacies may be found in that sentence of his Autobiography where he betrays the fact of his liability, from youth upwards, to flatulency. What he mistook for conscience was flatulence, which others (it is well known) have mistaken for inspiration. This was his original misfortune : his second was that he lived before

Will Whiston," and which, as Dr. Monk observes, is "exceedingly improbable."

About five months after his marriage, he was collated to the Archdeaconry of Ely, which brought with it not only honour, but (which is better) two church livings.

After this, Dr. Bentley never actively solicited any further preferment, except once. This was in 1717, when the Regius Professorship of Divinity, by far the richest in Europe, became vacant by the death of Dr. James. It was held that Bentley, as head of Trinity, was ineligible; for it might have happened, by the letter of the statutes, that he himself, in one character, would become judge of his own delinquencies in the other. However, there was at least one precedent in his favour; and, as the real scruples of his opponents grew out of anything but principle, whilst his very enemies could not deny that his qualifications for the place were unrivalled, it is agreeable to record that the intrigues for defeating him were met and baffled by far abler intrigues of his own, and, on the 2d of May 1718, he was installed in this most lucrative office.

Referring to the earlier years of his connexion with Trinity College, I may characterise his conduct generally as one continued series of munificent patronage to literature, beneficial reforms in college usages and discipline (many of which are still retained at this day with gratitude), and, finally, by the most splendid and extensive improvements of the college buildings. His acts of the first class were probably contemplated by the fellows with indifference; but those of the second, as cutting off abuses from which they had a personal benefit, or as carried forward with too high a hand, and by means not always statutable, armed the passions of a large majority against him; whilst the continued drain upon their purses for public objects, which, it must be confessed, was in some instances immoderately lavish, sharpened the hostile excitement by the irritation of immediate self-interest. Hence arose a faction so strongly organised for the purpose of thwarting him in future, and of

the age of powerful drastic journals. Had he been contemporary with Christopher North, the knout would have brought him to his senses, and extorted the gratitude of Mrs. Whiston and her children.

punishing him for the past, as certainly no delinquencies of the most eminent state criminal have ever yet called forth in any small community. Bentley, however, resisted with one hand, and continued to offend with the other. The contest soon became a judicial one; and, as it was the most memorable one in all respects that England has ever witnessed—if regard be had to its duration, and the inexhaustible resources of the person whose interest was chiefly at stake upon its issue—I shall give a faithful abstract of its revolutions, condensed from many scores of pages in Dr. Monk's quarto. In any life of Bentley this affair must occupy a foremost place; and, considering the extreme intricacy of Dr. Monk's account, and the extreme falsehood of that in all former biographies, I hope to earn the thanks of my readers by this close, yet brief, analysis.

On the 21st of December 1709 the feuds of Trinity College, which had been long ripening to a crisis, were first brought under the eye of a competent manager. On that day, Mr. Edmund Miller, a fellow of Trinity, coming on a Christmas visit to his old friends, happened to enter the college at the very moment when a fresh encroachment of Dr. Bentley's had flung the whole society into agitation. To Miller, as a lawyer and a fellow, their grievances were submitted by the college; and, as he lost no time in avowing himself their champion, and in very insolent terms, Dr. Bentley lost as little in forcibly dispossessing him of his fellowship—an act of violence which was peculiarly mistimed; for it did not lessen Miller's power, whilst stimulating his zeal, and adding one more to the colourable grounds of complaint. Miller's name was struck off the college boards on the 18th of January; on the 19th it was restored by the vice-master and some senior fellows; and on the 24th it was again struck off by Bentley. Matters, it may be supposed, were now coming to extremities; and about this time it was that Bentley is said to have exclaimed, "Henceforward, farewell peace to Trinity College!"

For all important disputes which can arise in the different colleges (about forty-five in number) which compose the English universities, the final appeal lies to the particular *visitor* of each college. But in the present case a

previous question arose: "Who *was* the visitor?"—the Crown, or the Bishop of Ely? Two separate codes of statutes, each in force, held a language on this point inconsistent with each other, and the latter code was even inconsistent with itself. However, as it happened that the particular statute which met the present case spoke unequivocally of the bishop as visitor, it was resolved to abide by that assumption. And therefore, after communicating with the bishop, a formal petition was addressed to his lordship, and on the 6th of February 1710 signed by the vice-master and twenty-nine fellows. The bishop, having received the petition without delay, made as little in sending to Bentley a copy of it. And to this Bentley replied in a printed letter addressed to the bishop. The two general heads under which the charges against Bentley had been gathered were dilapidation of the college funds and violation of the statutes. These charges in the present letter are met circumstantially; and, in particular, on that principal attempt of Bentley's to effect a new and reformed distribution of the college income, which had in fact furnished the determining motive to the judicial prosecution of the quarrel, Dr. Monk admits that he makes out a very powerful case. Mortified vanity and disappointed self-interest Bentley describes as the ruling impulses of his enemies. "Had I," says he, "herded and sotted with them, had I suffered them to play their cheats in their several offices—I might have done what I would, I might have devoured and destroyed the college, and yet come away with their applauses for a great and good master." Bentley, in fact, stood in the unhappy situation of a most unpopular head succeeding to one who had been memorably popular. From whatsoever motive, he had not courted the society of his fellows: that of itself was a slight that could not be forgiven, and which I do not defend; but perhaps, on the whole, it is true that, from pure mortified self-esteem, united with those baser impulses which Bentley points out, fastening upon such occasions as the rashness of Bentley too readily supplied, the prosecution against him *did* radically take its rise.

What was the prevailing impression left by Bentley's pamphlet we do not learn. However, as it was well

understood to be really his, it did not fail to provoke numerous answers; amongst which Mr. Miller's was eminent for the closeness of its legal arguments, and Blomer's for wit and caustic personality. After the petition, however, with the exception of some attempts on Bentley's side to disunite his enemies, by holding out temptations, which, as often as they failed, were immediately carried to account by the opposite faction as meditated breaches of the statute, it does not appear that either side made any movement until the 11th July 1710, when the charges against Bentley were finally digested into fifty-four separate articles. These, having first been presented to the Bishop of Ely, were published in the shape of a pamphlet, supported by such extracts from the statutes as seemed necessary to illustrate or substantiate the charges. The bishop's first step was to send a copy of the articles to Bentley; who, on his part, appears "to have taken no notice of them whatever." This, be it observed, for many a good year, continued to be a right-hand mode of manœuvring with Bentley: unless stirred up by a very long pole, he would not roar for any man.

Meantime, in this year (1710) had occurred that most memorable of all intrigues, which, out of no deeper root than the slippery tricks of a waiting-woman, had overset the policy of Europe. The Whigs were kicked out; the Tories were kicked in. So far the game went just the wrong way for Bentley,—his name being always, for fancy, borne on the Whig lists: but all *that*, in a man not seriously political, or having any leisure for politics as a grave pursuit, was practically a mere verbal flourish. Any public disadvantages of his party being ousted were compensated a thousand times over by the private benefit that his wife happened to be related to Lord Bolingbroke (then Mr. Secretary St. John), and also to Mr. Masham, husband of Queen Anne's new and momentary favourite. "On this hint" Bentley moved. By one or both of these channels (a man cannot have too many strings to his bow) he reached the ear of Mr. Harley, the now Earl of Oxford and the new Lord Treasurer. The Queen was already won over to his cause; for she had been acquainted of old with the doctor; and Mrs. Bentley's court connexions took care that the scandalous

lives of some amongst Bentley's opponents should lose nothing in the telling. The doctor was "invited" by the Prime Minister to sketch a scheme of conciliation; and, in obedience, he drew up the model of a royal letter, which has since been found amongst the Harleian Papers. Let it not offend the reader to hear that in this letter each separate point in dispute was settled in favour of the doctor himself. Reasonable as that was, however, *Diis aliter visum est:* the minister was far too tortuous himself to approve of such *very* plain dealing. Indeed, as a lesson upon human nature, the "royal letter" must have been a perfect curiosity: for, by way of applying a remedy to the master's notorious infirmity of excessive indulgence and lax discipline, the letter concluded with strictly enjoining him "to chastise all licence among the fellows"—viz. the very men in whose hostility to himself the whole mighty feud had arisen—and promising royal countenance and co-operation in the discharge of duties so salutary.

Whether this bold stroke came to the knowledge of the enemy is hard to say; for Dr. Monk gives us reason to think that it did, and did not, in the very same sentence. Certain it is that Bentley's royal letter was forwarded to the premier on the 10th November 1710; and on the 21st of that month he received a peremptory summons from the Bishop of Ely to answer the articles against him by the 18th of December. At one time Bentley avowed a design of appealing to the Convocation; but for this, when steps were taken to baffle him, he substituted a petition to the queen, explaining that Her Majesty was the true visitor of Trinity College; that, as to the Bishop of Ely—who was he? nothing more, nothing less, than a dangerous usurper; and that he, Richard Bentley, resisting this usurpation, threw himself on her royal protection.

This petition met with immediate attention, and was referred by Mr. Secretary St. John to the Attorney and Solicitor-General, who meantime stayed the bishop's proceedings. Five months were spent in hearing all parties; and on May 29 1711 the two officers made their report, which was favourable to the bishop's claim as respected Bentley, but pointed out to the queen and the doctor a legal

mode of resisting it. As this decision left Bentley to no more than a common remedy at law, he determined to obtain higher protection; and on July 12 he addressed a letter to Harley, now Earl of Oxford, congratulating him on his recent escape from assassination (viz. by the French Count Guiscard), stating his own situation, and concluding with the offer of dedicating to his lordship the edition which he had been long preparing of Horace. In those pleasant days, a dedication from an author of weight was what the French used to understand by a *pot-de-vin;* in fact, "spelt short," it was a bribe, and in these days would not only miss fire, and produce a sudden blaze of indignant virtue from the Viscount Palmerston, but would also be prosecuted by Her Majesty's Attorney-General. Far different was its fate at present. This appeal obtained for him the minister's active protection; the bishop was again directed to stay proceedings; and on the 8th of December the Horace was published, with a dedication, taking due notice of Harley's honours[1] of descent from the Veres and Mortimers. Bentley avowed his own change of party, by saying that "Horace was not less in favour with Mecænas from his having once served under the banners of Brutus and Cassius."

In 1712, after above seven months' deliberation, the crown lawyers made a report on the question of—*Who was visitor?* It was unfavourable to Bentley; for, though declaring the Crown visitor in a general sense, it decided, notwithstanding, for the Bishop of Ely, in one solitary contingency—viz. in any case of delinquency charged upon the master. But *that* was the very case now in question; and one of the lawyers, Sir Joseph Jekyll, declared for the bishop unconditionally. At last, then, it was expected that the interdict on the bishop would be immediately taken off. However, it was not; and some speculations arose at that time upon this apparent mystery, which have since appeared to be unfounded. Mrs. Bentley's influence was supposed to be at work. But the secret history of the intrigue was very different. The truth

[1] I know not how true Harley's pretensions in this particular may be: certainly Lord Bolingbroke ridicules them harshly, in his letter to Sir William Wyndham, as mere jovial inspirations from the fumes of claret.

was this:—Bentley's enemies had now found their way to Lord Oxford's ear. This should naturally have operated to Bentley's ruin; but, fortunately for him, the Treasurer viewed the whole case as one not unworthy of his own management upon Machiavelian principles. A compromise of the dispute was probably what the minister designed, and, if that were found impossible, an evasion, by a timely removal of Bentley to some other situation.

Meantime, these conciliatory intentions on the part of the premier were suddenly defeated by a strong measure of Bentley's. In the winter of 1712 he refused his consent to the usual division of the college funds. Attacked in this quarter, the fellows became desperate. Miller urged an application to the Court of Queen's Bench, with a view to compel the Bishop of Ely to proceed as visitor; for it was believed that the royal interdict would not be recognised by that court. Upon this the ministers shrank from the prospect of being publicly exposed as partisans in private cabals; and Lord Bolingbroke wrote hastily to the Bishop of Ely, giving him the queen's permission to proceed "as far as by law he was empowered." Thus warranted, the fellows brought their cause before the Queen's Bench, and before the end of Easter term 1713 obtained a rule for the bishop to show cause why a mandamus should not issue to compel him to discharge his judicial functions.

Two considerable advantages had been obtained by Bentley about this time. He had been able to apply the principle of *divide et impera* in the appointment to an office of some dignity and power,—a success which, though it really amounted to no more than the detaching from his enemies of that single member who benefited by the bribe, he had dexterously improved into a general report that the party arrayed against him were penitent and disunited. The other advantage was of still higher promise. Early in the summer of 1712 the negotiations for peace then pending at Utrecht had furnished the Whigs with an occasion for attack upon ministers which was expected to unseat them. How sanguine were the hopes embarked upon this effort appears by the following passage from Swift's "Journal to Stella":—"We got a great victory last Wednesday in the House of Lords,

by a majority, I think, of twenty-eight; *and the Whigs had desired their friends to bespeak places to see Lord Treasurer* [viz. Oxford] *carried to the Tower.*" In this critical condition, it was important to Oxford and Bolingbroke that their security should appear to stand not merely upon parliamentary majorities, but also on the general sense of the country. Addresses, therefore, expressing public confidence were particularly welcome at court; and Bentley managed one for them at Cambridge, which he was deputed to present.

But these were advantages which could avail him nothing in the new posture of the dispute. The Court of Queen's Bench had relieved the Bishop of Ely from the royal interdict. The bishop lost no time in throwing Bentley upon his defence. Bentley replied laconically (June 13, 1713); and, after some further interchange of written pleadings with his accusers, he attempted to bring the whole affair to an abrupt issue at Cambridge; in which case, for want of mature evidence, an acquittal must have followed. But the bishop was on his guard. He had engaged the late Whig Lord Chancellor (Lord Cowper), and Dr. Newton, an eminent civilian,[1] as his assessors; and he replied drily that, if it suited their convenience, November would be the time of trial, but, at all events, London would be the place, as best furnished for both sides with the proper legal aids.

However, it happened, from the political agitations of that period, that the trial did not in fact come on until May 1714. The great hall of Ely House was the court-room, and eight of the most eminent lawyers of the day assisted on one side or other as counsel. On the charge of wasting the college goods Bentley made out a strong case. He produced the sanction of a majority; and the funds, it appeared, had been applied, at any rate, to the adorning and

[1] "*Civilian*":—Under the fashionable, and most childish, use of this word now current (viz. to indicate simply a non-military person) —a use which has disturbed and perplexed all our past literature for six centuries—it becomes necessary to explain that by *civilian* is meant in English—1, one who professes and practises the *civil law*, as opposed to the *common* or municipal law of England; 2, one who teaches or expounds this civil law; 3, one who studies it. In this place, as applied to Dr. Newton, it bears the *first* sense.

repairing of the college. As to the other charge of violating the statutes, it had been Bentley's custom to palliate his strong measures by shifting between the statute and the practice, just as either happened to afford him most countenance; but there were some acts oppressive beyond the countenance of either precedent or statute. Public opinion, and, it is supposed, the private opinion of the bishop, had hitherto powerfully favoured Bentley, but forsook him as the trial advanced; and tradition records that on some remarkable expression of this change Bentley fainted away—a thing not very credible to me. At length, after six weeks' duration, the visitor was satisfied that the case had been established, and ordered a sentence of ejection from the mastership to be drawn up. This was done, and the sentence was afterwards found amongst his papers. Meantime, the good Bishop Moore had caught cold during the long sittings; and on the 31st of July, before any of his apparitors could execute the sentence, he was himself summoned away by a sterner apparitor to another world. On the day following died Queen Anne; and in one moment the favour of Oxford and Bolingbroke had become something worse than worthless. Thus suddenly did Bentley see both friends and foes vanish from the scene; and the fine old quarrel of Trinity College fell back to the *status quo ante bellum*, and was welcome to begin the world again. And there is an end to the first campaign.

So passed the first five years of the feud. Fleetwood, the new Bishop of Ely, declined to act as visitor of the master, unless he could also *visit* the fellows. Upon this significant hint, the prosecutors of Bentley, now reduced by six, who had died during the struggle, acceded to a compromise. Sensible, however, that so long as Miller continued to be a fellow the stifled fire would be continually rekindled, Bentley applied the whole force of his mind to eject him. A former pretext had been quashed; he now found a new one—but all in vain. The result for the present was simply to refresh the fury of Miller. He was now become a sergeant; and he laid fresh articles before the bishop,—who persisted, however, in declining to act.

At this point of the history a new actor came upon the stage, who brought to the management of the quarrel self-

devotion like that of a Christian martyr, and malignity like that of a Pagan persecutor. This was Dr. Colbatch, professor of casuistry. As a fellow of Trinity College, he had unavoidably taken some interest in the affair from the first; but either, through duty and gratitude, he had supported the master, or had passed into a state of strict neutrality, or, finally, had acquiesced with reluctance in the measures of Miller. At length, however, it is said that some affair of college leases, in the terms of which Bentley seemed to sacrifice reversionary to present interests, put an end to his languor; and he parted from the master in a state of enmity that in this life was destined to experience neither gradual decay nor momentary lull.

Now, then, the college was in perfect anarchy; yet the Bishop of Ely still refused to interfere, unless ordered by the King — viz., O Bezonian reader, that hast been perfidiously slumbering, a new king from Hanover, whom Mr. Walter Savage Landor describes as "the wretch with white eyebrows,"

> "Whom the inclement winds
> Blew blighting from north-east."

In this dilemma, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Wake (the same, I think, who entertained the mad project for some sort of union between the Anglican and Gallican Church), pointed out the steps to be taken; amongst which the first was a petition to the king in council. His Grace had himself lately received an affront from Dick, and he now declared the jolly old doctor to be "the greatest instance of human frailty that he knew of." After some delay, caused by the weakness of the fellows in neglecting a prudent caution of the archbishop, the petition was called for by the council, and read. Then came a scene in the history of public business worthy of Swift. The council remits the case to Sir Edward Northey, at that time attorney-general; Mr. Attorney remits to the Bishop of Ely; the bishop remits back again to Mr. Attorney; and finally exit Mr. Attorney in a hurry, with all the papers in a bundle—for Sir Edward was soon dismissed from office, and carried off the quarrel in his pocket. This was in 1716: for the three years which succeeded Colbatch allowed himself to be amused with the merest moonshine by the chancellor,

Lord Macclesfield, who secretly protected Bentley. In 1719 the petition came again to light, and, being read at the council board, was referred by the Lords Justices, who represented the absent king, to a committee of the Privy Council. This resurrection from Sir Edward Northey's pocket was a sad blow to Bentley: three years' slumber gave him hopes that the petition had been applied to what Coleridge styles some "culinary or post-culinary purpose,"—in which case he was well assured that another of equal weight could no longer be substituted. However, the next step was to get it *laid*, and that could be done only by a compromise with Sergeant Miller. This had been attempted in vain some years back, as it happened that the sergeant was at that time discharging his wrath in a book against the doctor. That book, however, hurt nobody but its author; and the sergeant now listened favourably to an overture which offered him a profitable retreat. He retired for ever from the contest, with the reputation of a traitor, and £528 sterling in his purse; he rose afterwards to be a member of Parliament, and a baron of exchequer in Scotland; but in Cambridge he never retrieved his character.

For eleven years the quarrel had now raged in the courts; for the next seven, in consequence of this compromise with Miller, and the Bishop of Ely's *inertia*, it was conducted by the press; and strange it is to record that all attempts in this way of Bentley's enemies, though practised authors, recoiled heavily on themselves: how many pamphlets, so many libels. Sergeant Miller had already paid dearly for *his*. Next came Conyers Middleton, who, in two particular sentences, seemed to intimate that justice could not be had (or even a hearing) from the king in council. In November 1721 the King and Richard Bentley taught him in Westminster Hall to take a new view of the subject. He was compelled to ask pardon, and heavily amerced in costs. Colbatch, with this warning before his eyes, committed exactly the same fault,—in *not* exactly the same shape, for it was a more dangerous shape. He was prosecuting Bentley as the supposed author of a supposed libel on himself in the university courts; and, in support of the university jurisdiction, he published a book called "Jus Academicum."

Circumstances arose, however, to convince him that more danger was at hand to himself than his antagonist, and he declared himself willing to drop the proceedings. "Are you so?" said Bentley; "but so am not I." There is a vulgar story of a gentle Quaker, who, finding a dog in the act of robbing his larder, declined rough modes of punishment, but said he would content himself with a parting admonition; upon which, opening the door to the dog, he cried after him, "Mad dog! good people, a mad dog!" In the same fashion did Bentley, not troubling himself to institute prosecutions, quietly beg leave, by his counsel, to read a sentence or two from the "Jus Academicum" before the judges of the King's Bench. That was enough: the judges bounced like quicksilver, for their jurisdiction was questioned; and Dr. Colbatch, in Mr. Thurtell's language, was "booked." The troubles he went through in skulking from justice, and running after great men's intercession, would really make a novel. The following extracts from Dr. Monk's account lift up the veil upon the wretched condition of him who is struggling in the meshes of penal law. After mentioning that the two Secretaries of State had promised their intercession with the Chief Justice, the account goes on thus:—

"He himself preferred his application to the Lord Chancellor, now Earl of Macclesfield, who, however great might be his faults, was remarkably accessible and affable. He indulged Colbatch with many interviews; and, although he condemned without reserve the offending passages of his book, promised him his good offices with the Chief Justice,[1] to make the consequences light. But the patronage of these great ministers was not calculated to render the unfortunate divine any real service. The distinguished judge who presided on the bench entertained a high notion of the dignity of his court. He had also too just an opinion of the sanctity of the judicial character not to be jealous of the interference of persons in power with the administration of justice. He therefore heard the representations of the cabinet ministers without the least disposition to attend to them; insomuch that the Premier accounted for his inflexibility by observing that *Pratt had got to the top of his preferment, and was therefore refractory and not to be governed by them.*"

Soon after this, the publisher, Wilkin, was brought to the bar.

[1] Viz. Pratt, Lord Camden.

"The affrighted bookseller made an effort to save himself, by declaring that Dr. Colbatch was the author; but the Chief Justice told him that he might do as he pleased about giving up the author, for it should not save him from the punishment due to the offence of circulating the pamphlet; and that his fate should be a warning to other publishers; adding that the court would serve the author in the same way if brought before them. Wilkin's terrors were greatly augmented when, upon applying in the evening at the chambers of Mr. Justice Fortescue to be bailed, he was informed by his lordship that he had that day taken as bail of the publisher of the 'Freeholder's Journal' (a treasonable paper) £1000, and £500 for each of his sureties; and he was actually required to produce the same amount, the judge saying that his offence was as great, or greater."

The danger now thickened; and Colbatch was advised to keep out of the way, and with the utmost speed to procure the king's pardon, which had been promised him by *both* Secretaries of State. In what manner great men kept their promises in those days the reader shall hear:—

"When he renewed his application for the interference of the great ministers in his favour, he found their tone much altered. Lord Carteret, in particular, had at first been profuse in his assurances of protection in case of the worst. '*Should the doctor be sent to prison, here,*' said he, brandishing his pen, '*is Mercury's wand which will soon fetch him out.*' Now, however, his lordship's language was altered; he advised so and so, and he would undertake that nothing should hurt him. But Dr. Friend, whose heart misgave him on this point, begged his lordship to pledge his word that, in case of the worst, *Mercury's wand* should be put in operation. Re-encouraged by a fresh promise, the delinquent, who had changed his lodgings to escape notice, now put on his gown, and appeared publicly in the streets and in Westminster Hall. But here some lawyers, upon learning the grounds of his security, told him to *despair his charm*, for that, if he confessed himself the author of 'Jus Academicum,' the king himself could not hinder his being sent to prison."

Well, Colbatch, how do you find yourself by this time? I think you'll not meddle with our Dick again. And through the rest of that eighteenth century perhaps you'll see cause to let decent people go along the high road unmolested in future.

Colbatch, in fact, was shaking in his shoes; and in 1722 he thought it his best plan to strengthen himself with new friends, such as the Archbishop of York, the President of the Council, and many others. But at length he discovered "that there was a lion in his path, which intercepted all his

prospects of powerful mediation." And who should this lion be? Why, simply that friend (the chancellor, to wit) who was the warmest of all in professions. What a picture of courts does the following passage expose!—

"The minister (Lord Townshend) then sent him to wait upon the Chief Justice, with a message from himself, intimating that the Crown would interfere to stay proceedings, and wishing to know in what manner that object could most properly be effected. Colbatch proceeded immediately to Sir John Pratt's, but found that he was just gone out; whereupon an unfortunate idea came across his mind, that he ought to go and communicate the minister's designs to the Lord Chancellor, lest he should appear to distrust the promise of the latter. This wily lord, having learned the state of the case, determined to counteract what was doing; and, under pretence of smoothing the way, made the doctor promise not to deliver Lord Townshend's message to the Chief Justice, till he had himself seen him upon the subject. Colbatch, however, presently perceiving that he had been surprised and tricked by this exalted personage, went back to Lord Townshend, and candidly told him what had passed. The minister revived his spirits by promising to procure him the king's pardon the next day, and directed him to call upon him again in the evening at his office, when he (Colbatch, to wit) should see and talk with the chancellor. Going at the time appointed, he found a cabinet meeting just broken up. Lord Townshend, as soon as he saw him, ordered Lord Macclesfield to be recalled; and the two great men held a long conversation apart, in which the chancellor contrived to intercept the favour designed for the unfortunate Colbatch. They then joined him, and Lord Macclesfield urged that nothing more was required of him but to make a reasonable apology to the court, and that he would be committed to satisfy form; that this would be only nominal, as he would regain his liberty the next day; and earnestly advised him to undergo this trivial ordeal. Lord Townshend then joined in the recommendation, saying, '*Do, good doctor, do.*' Thus pressed, he had no alternative but to acquiesce, although he was no longer deceived, but saw himself the victim of a hard-hearted policy."

Certainly, if the doctor's friends were knaves, *ou à-peu-pres*, the doctor himself was a fool, *ou à-peu-pres.* And the very perfection of folly—pig-headed folly (opposed to equal pig-headedness in the judge)—appears in the final scene of this little drama; which I transcribe as a fair rival to any of the same kind in "Gil Blas," or other cynical painters of high civilisation:—

"After, &c. &c., Dr. Colbatch was again brought up before the King's Bench, to petition for his discharge; whereupon Sir Littleton Powis, the senior puisne judge, delivered him his final objurgation.

His lordship had just been reading 'Jus Academicum,' and was master of its contents; but, unfortunately for the author, he considered some of the reflections, intended for Dr. Bentley, as levelled against the court. He termed the appeals made to *foreign* lawyers quite *foreign* to the purpose;—a conceit which took his lordship's fancy so much that he repeated it three or four times in the course of his speech. But the most disastrous point was the motto of the book, '*Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat*'—('Laws he refuses to regard as having any existence for himself; there is nothing which he does not insolently claim'). He accused Colbatch of applying to the Court of King's Bench the most virulent verse in all Horace, '*Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non* ABROGAT'—('*Nothing that he does not* AB*rogate*'). The culprit immediately set him right as to Horace's word; and told him, besides, that the motto was intended to apply, not to the judges, but to Dr. Bentley. Sir Littleton, however, would not be driven from what he considered his stronghold; he thrice recurred to this unhappy quotation, which accused their lordships of *abrogating* the laws; and *each time* Colbatch was imprudent enough to interrupt and correct him—['*arrogat*, my lord, *arrogat*—not abrogat']. At last the court remarked to his counsel, Kettelbey, that his client did not appear to be sensible of being in contempt; and, to convince him of that fact, sentenced him to pay £50, to be imprisoned till it was paid, and to give security for his good behaviour for a year."

It will appear like judicial infatuation in Bentley's enemies that, on that same day when this scene took place in the King's Bench, another process was commenced against Conyers Middleton for a libel upon the same court. "The pamphlet being handed to the bench, the Chief Justice pronounced that, if Dr. Middleton were really the author, he must be the most ungrateful man alive, considering that the court had already treated him with so much lenity." In fact, this unhappy coincidence in time of the two cases gave to the reverend libellers the appearance of being in a conspiracy. However, though Middleton would not take a lesson from his friend to avoid his offence, he *did* as regarded the management of his defence. He applied to no Lord Macclesfields or Secretaries of State; and, in consequence, he met precisely the same punishment as Colbatch, without the same protracted suffering. And thus ended the sixth suit which Bentley had prosecuted to a triumphant issue within three years in the King's Bench, himself enjoying all the time the most absolute *otium cum dignitate*, whilst his malicious enemies were mere footballs to the fury of law.

These, however, were no more than episodes in the great *epos* of the original quarrel. In the latter end of 1727, after a seven years' rest, this began to revive. Like a snake from a long, long winter, unwinding his venomous links at the genial touch of a vernal noon, the old original feud, quickening into cruel life, began to look around for new victims. Bishop Fleetwood had been succeeded in the see of Ely by Greene; who was willing to act, provided his expenses were guaranteed, and certain legal questions answered favourably. His demands were granted; and, five eminent lawyers having separately returned satisfactory answers, preparations were making for assault. Though managed silently, Bentley heard of them, and immediately petitioned the King, telling him that the Bishop of Ely was going to rob him of his rights. Dick had protected one great sovereign, last of the Stewarts, from the tricks of usurpers, and now prepared to do the same loyal service for another, the founder of a new dynasty. After three months' waiting for the result, the bishop in turn petitioned the King to be heard on behalf of his see. A committee of the Privy Council was then appointed. Delays, as usual, were devised by Bentley; and not before March 1729 did the committee decide that "they could not advise His Majesty to interfere at all, but that the bishop was at liberty to proceed as he thought proper."

Richard Bentley had come to a different decision, as he soon made Bishop Greene understand. In November his lordship began to stir; but Bentley soon pulled him up, by moving the King's Bench for a prohibition, on the ground that, before he could be "visited," he must be twice admonished by the vice-master: now, as he took care to have a vice-master of his own choosing, this was not likely to happen before the Greek calends. The judges at length refused the prohibition, holding that the preliminary admonition was required only in cases of petty delinquencies. Bishop Greene was therefore once more declared at liberty to proceed; and at last it was thought, says Dr. Monk, "that all Bentley's resources were at an end."

Little did they know of Richard Bentley who thought thus. On the 2d June 1729 steps were again taken at

Ely House, and a further day assigned. Before that day came, again had Bentley put a spoke in the bishop's wheel He applied to the King's Bench for a writ of prohibition on new grounds ; and this time he succeeded. Next term, the bishop applied to have the prohibition taken off. But that was more easily asked than granted. Bentley had bothered the judges with a paper which cost a week even to copy. The judges had no time to read it, and were obliged to continue the prohibition ; and then came the long vacation. In November 1729 the campaign opened again ; but the court declared that no case like this had ever come before them, and declined to pronounce judgment until it had been argued by way of declaration and answer.

In 1730, with the vernal resurrection of nature, up rose the everlasting process. "Up rose the sun," says Chaucer, in "Palamon and Arcite"—"up rose the sun, and up rose Emilie." Up rose verdant Dr. Greene, and up rose the ever-verdant process. Bishop Greene put in his plea. Bentley took no notice of it ; nor would to this hour, had not a rule been applied for to compel him. At the last minute of the time allowed, he replied, by asking for time—a month, for instance. The court granted a week. At the last minute of the week he put in a *replication*, which, in Strange's Reports, is described as "immaterial."

Upon this the bishop, in technical phrase, *demurred*. But here, again, Bentley got Bishop Greene under his arm, and "fibbed" him cruelly. It is presumed in law that, for his own interest, a plaintiff will proceed quickly ; so that, if he should not, the rules of court make no provision for compelling him. Now, it is true that Bentley was defendant on the main case ; yet, on that part of it which came before the Court of King's Bench, he was plaintiff; of course he made no sign of proceeding. In Trinity term measures were taken to compel him. But next came another step, which also belongs to plaintiff. Plaintiff failed. As this was no more than making up what is called a "paper book," defendant did it for him. But this Bentley would not hear of. "By no means," said he ; "it is my duty to do it. I have failed ; and I insist on being compelled to do my duty." And in this way again he whiled away the year until the

long vacation arrived, when all men rest from their labour. Who will deny that his friends in Cambridge did right in giving the unconquerable old man a triumphal reception, meeting him at Bourn Bridge, and preparing him a welcome in Trinity College "in a manner similar to that of His Majesty's late reception in Cambridge"?

Michaelmas term, 1730, the judges, after hearing three days' argument, gave judgment against two of Bentley's pleas; on the third they postponed their decision.

Easter term, 1731, arrived, and new light dawned for Bentley. The charges against him all went upon a presumed validity of certain statutes, known as Queen Elizabeth's, which had superseded the elder statutes of Edward VI; and no question had arisen but as to which set of statutes were valid for this particular case. Suddenly the judges themselves started a question—Were these statutes valid for *any* case? Counsel on neither side had heard a whisper in that direction. Being uninstructed, they were silent. The judges differed amongst themselves, and the result seemed doubtful. But all at once they discovered a screw loose in another quarter. It was this: the bishop had described himself as "visitor especially authorised and appointed by the 40th of Queen Elizabeth's statutes." Now, waiving the other question, at any rate it was the elder statutes which had created his jurisdiction, the Elizabethan (supposing them valid) having at most recognised it. This flaw was held fatal by the whole bench, in other respects not unanimous; and a sufficient reason thus rose suddenly as if on wings for continuing the prohibition.

So terminated this stage of the interminable process: damages to the prosecutors, little less than £1000; and to Bentley, whose costs fell on the college (and in their proportion, therefore, upon the prosecutors), £1300. Prosecutors had to pay Bentley £289, as costs contracted in discussing objections of *his* raising, notwithstanding every one of these objections had been dismissed. Such a result of their malice it is delightful to record.

How Dr. Monk reconciles it with the fact of the continued prohibition, I do not pretend to guess; so it is, however, that I now find him speaking of Bishop Greene as

being at liberty to proceed "at discretion." However, we must take things as we find them. In July 1731 Bentley, on suspicion that Bishop Greene was meditating a choice of courses, resolved to spare Bishop Greene any course at all. With that view he petitioned the king to prohibit him by a *fiat* of the attorney-general. This new attack exhausted Bishop Greene's entire stock of patience, which never had been much of a burden to carry. Bishop Greene began to sing out furiously; and, when our Richard's petition, after two hearings, was dismissed as illegal in its prayer, his lordship resolved to go in to his man, and finish him in as few rounds as possible. Yet how? After much deliberation, it was resolved to adopt the plan of an appeal to the House of Lords for a reversal of the late judgment of the King's Bench.

It is ludicrous to mention that, whilst this grand measure was pending, a miniature process occurred, which put all parties to the great one through what had now become their regular facings. Bentley had expelled a gentleman from Trinity College. Of course the man appealed to the Bishop of Ely; of course, the Bishop of Ely cited Bentley before him; of course, Bentley treated the citation with contempt, and applied to the King's Bench for his old familiar friend—the rule to prohibit; and, of course, the court granted it. Upon which this feud merged quietly into the bosom of the main one; which now, ancient toad as it was, with all the little tadpoles riding on its back, awaited the decision of the Upper House of Parliament.

On the 6th of May, the case opened before this illustrious court, who were now to furnish a *peripeteia*, or dramatic catastrophe, to an affair which had occupied and confounded all sorts of courts known to the laws or usages of this kingdom. "The interest attached to the cause, and the personage whose fortunes were at stake," says Dr. Monk, "produced full houses on almost every day that it was argued." The judges were ordered to attend the House during its continuance; and, from the novelty of the case or some other reason, it was followed by the Peers with singular zest and attention.

On the 8th of May, the judgment of the King's Bench

was reversed, chiefly (it is believed) through a speech of Bishop Sherlock's. The House then undertook, after some debate, to deliberate separately upon all the articles of accusation preferred against Bentley. This deliberation extended into the next session; and upon the 15th of February 1733 final judgment was pronounced, giving to the Bishop of Ely permission to try the Master of Trinity on twenty of the sixty-four articles. The first court was held at Ely House on the 13th of June 1733; and on the 27th of April 1734, the whole trial being concluded, Bishop Greene—unsupported, however, by his assessors, both of whom, it is known, were for a sentence of acquittal—"in terms of great solemnity" declared that Dr. Bentley was proved guilty both of dilapidating the goods of his college and violating its statutes, and accordingly *pronounced him to be deprived of the mastership of Trinity College.*

At length, then, after infinite doubles through a chase of five-and-twenty years, the old fox is hunted to earth; but who shall be the man to smoke him out? Bentley saw no reason why the matter of execution might not be made to yield as good sport as the matter of trial. He had already provided an evasion; it was this: the statute says that, when convicted, the master shall, without delay, be stripped of his office by the vice-master. He only was authorised to execute the sentence. The course then was clear: a vice-master was to be provided who would *not* do his duty. The bishop had a sort of resource in such a case. But Bentley had good reasons for believing that it would be found unserviceable. Wanted, therefore, immediately, for Trinity College, a stout-hearted son of thunder, able to look a bully in the face. How ardently must Bentley have longed to be his own vice! As that could not be, he looked out for the next best man on the roll.

Meantime, the bishop issued three copies of his sentence—one to Dr. Bentley, one for the college gates, and a third to Dr. Hacket, the vice-master, requiring him to see it executed. The odious Colbatch already rioted in his vengeance: more than delay he did not suspect; yet even this exasperated his venom; and he worried the poor vice with his outcries, which night and day ascended to the skies.

Bentley, be it remembered, was now in his seventy-third year: his services to Trinity College, to classical literature, to religion, were greater that can be readily estimated. Of his prosecutors and judge, on the other hand, with a slight change in Caligula's wish, any honest man might desire for the whole body one common set of posteriors, that in planting a single kick he might have expressed his collective disdain of them, their acts and their motives. Yet, old as Bentley was, and critical as he found his situation, he lost no jot of his wonted cheerfulness. "He maintained," says his biographer, "not only his spirits, but his accustomed gaiety," and, in allusion to his own predicament, gave to the candidates for a scholarship, as a subject for a theme, the following words of Terence:—

> 'Hoc nunc dicis—
> Ejectos hinc nos: omnium rerum, heus, vicissitudo est!"

"This, now, is what you are saying—that I am served with a writ of ejectment? Well: ups and downs are what we must look for in all things."

Hacket, however, was not a man to depend upon; he "felt uneasy, and had no mind to become a victim in defence of one whom he regarded with no affection." Luckily, he was willing to resign; luckily, too, just then, Dr. Walker became eligible—a devoted friend, of whom Dr. Monk believes that he "would have cheerfully risked his life in the protection of his master." [1]

Dr. Walker was elected. He was not a man to be terrified by ugly words nor by grim faces. Bishop Greene sent his mandate to Dr. Walker, requiring him immediately to deprive the master: *no attention was paid.* Colbatch put bullying questions: Dr. Walker "*declined to give any reply.*" Then Bishop Greene petitioned the House of Lords, the very court which had directed him to try the doctor: the House kicked the petition out-of-doors. Then Bishop Greene

[1] Much drollery is extracted by Pope in the "Dunciad" from the relations between Bentley and Walker; but these relations are misrepresented, perhaps were misunderstood, by Pope. The dependency of Walker was one of love and burning admiration, not of obsequiousness or servility.

turned to the Court of King's Bench ; and the court granted a mandamus to Dr. Walker to do his duty. But that writ was so handled by Bentley's suggestions that the judges quashed it. Then Bishop Greene procured another *mandamus* in another shape—viz. a mandamus to himself to compel himself to compel Dr. Walker to do his duty. But that writ was adjudged, after long arguments, to be worse than the other. Then Bishop Greene obtained a third mandamus, which included some words that were thought certain to heal all defects : but, upon argument, it was found that those very words had vitiated it. And in this sort of work Bentley had now held them in play four years since the sentence. Now, then, all mankind, with Bishop Greene at their head, and Colbatch at their tail, verily despaired. Dr. Bentley had been solemnly sentenced and declared to be ejected ; yet all the artillery of the supreme courts of the kingdom could not be so pointed as to get him within range. Through four consecutive years after his sentence, writ upon writ, *mandamus* surmounting *mandamus*, had been issued against him ; but all in vain : budge he would not for gentle or simple : the smoke of his pipe still calmly ascended in Trinity Lodge. There is an amusing scene in Beaumont and Fletcher, where a care-hating old boy, being asked who he fancied was likely to furnish coats and trousers, breakfasts and dinners, year after year, to *him* that would take no thought or care for himself, replies that always in past years he had remarked, when he grew hungry, that he found breakfast or dinner waiting for him ; always, again, when his coat began to look seedy, he found a new one lying in his bedroom : it ever had been so according to some law of gravitation, and doubtless ever would be so. Pretty much in the same cheerful and enjoying frame of mind did Bentley sit by his happy fireside in Trinity Lodge through more than forty years, whilst uproars and storms were raving outside. At length, when the third writ was quashed by the judges of the King's Bench, after a solemn hearing on the 22d of April 1738, his enemies became finally satisfied that "this world was made for Cæsar," and that to dislodge our incomparable Dick by any forms of law yet discovered amongst men was a problem of sheer desperation. From

this day, therefore, that idle attempt was abandoned by all human beings except Colbatch, who could find nobody to join him : and from this date, twenty-nine years from the opening of the process, and about thirty-eight from the opening of the quarrel, its extinction may be dated. The case appears to have been fatal to the see of Ely; for Bishop Moore had lost his life in trying Bentley, Bishop Fleetwood saved *his* by letting him alone, and Bishop Greene, after floundering in his own sentence for four years, departed this life in a few days after finding out that it never would be executed.

Thus ended this great lawsuit, which occupied about two-thirds of Dr. Bentley's manhood.[1] After this, he amused himself with prosecuting old Colbatch for 3s. 6d., which Colbatch (upon principles of ecclesiastical polity) vehemently desired to cheat him of. It is gratifying to add that he "trounced" Colbatch, who was sentenced to pay 3s. 6d., together with 2s. 6d. arrears, and £20 costs.[2] Colbatch talked of applying to a higher court, but afterwards thought better on that subject, and confined his groans to a book—which it is to be hoped no mortal ever read.

This last of his thousand-and-one lawsuits terminated in 1740 : after which, he enjoyed a clear space of more than two years for assoiling himself from the irritation of earthly quarrels, and preparing for his end. His last appearance of a public nature was on occasion of something which I must not call foolery in the offending parties, since Dr. Monk considers it "alarming" ; and here it was that he delivered his final jest. A youth, whose name has not reached posterity

[1] As evidence of the violent and unjust hostility to Bentley which prevailed in Cambridge, it ought to be mentioned that, during the progress of this main feud, without a trial, and on the merest *ex parte* statement, Bentley was solemnly degraded and stripped of his degrees ; to which he was restored only after a struggle of five and a-half years, by a peremptory *mandamus* from the King's Bench.

[2] By the way, Colbatch must have been pretty well "cleaned out" by this time,—which is pleasing to believe ; for Dr. Monk, by examining the bursary books of Trinity College, has found that the costs of the suit were nominally £3657, but really not less than £4000 : so that, at one time, a pleasant prospect of starvation was before the college Over and above his share of all this, Colbatch had little pet libels of his own to provide for. Well is it that malice is sometimes a costly luxury !

with much lustre, one Strutt, had founded a sect of atheists, by a book published in 1732. The Struttian philosophy had been propagated by Mr. Tinkler Ducket, a fellow of Caius[1] College. Tinkler, ambitious (it seems) of martyrdom in the cause of Struttism, privately denounced his own atrocities: a great fuss ensued: bishops and archbishops were consulted: and, finally, Tinkler was brought to trial upon a charge of Strutting. He was fully proved to have Strutted, though he attempted to deny it: and on the last day of trial, Dr. Bentley being wanted to make up a *quorum* of heads, and by way of paying honour to the father of the university, who could not easily go to *them*, the court, with its appendages, atheist and all, adjourned to *him*. Court being seated, Bentley begged to know which was the atheist: and, upon Tinkler being pointed out to him, who happened to be a little meagre man, "Atheist!" said he, "how! is that the atheist? Why, I thought an atheist would be at least as big as Burrough the beadle!" Burrough, it may readily be supposed, was a burly personage, fitted to enact the part of leader to a defying philosophy.

This incident occurred early in 1739. Some time further on in the same year is fixed, conjecturally, as the period of a paralytic attack from which it is certain that he suffered at *some* time in his latter years. That it was a slight one is evident from the fact that he acted as an examiner for a scholarship within a month of his death.

About the beginning of the next year he lost his wife, in the fortieth year of a union memorably happy. His two daughters, both married, united their pious attentions to soothe his old age, and to win his thoughts from too painful a sense of this afflicting trial: and one of them, Mrs. Cumberland, having four children, filled his else desolate mansion with the sounds, long silent, of youthful mirth and gladness. "Surrounded with such friends, the doctor experienced the joint pressure of old age and infirmity as lightly as is consistent with the lot of humanity. He continued to amuse himself with reading; and, though nearly confined to his arm-chair, was able to enjoy the society of his

[1] Which, take notice, O reader that art a greenhorn, is not pronounced as it looks, but as if written *Keys*.

friends, and several rising scholars (Markland, John Taylor, Thomas Bentley, his nephew, &c.), who sought the conversation of the veteran Grecian: with them he still discussed the readings of classical authors, recited Homer, and expounded the doctrine of the Digamma."

Mr. Cumberland's portrait of his grandfather's amiable old age I forbear to quote, as probably familiar to most of my readers: but one or two peculiarities in the domestic habits of his latter years, as less known, I add from Dr. Monk:— "It is recorded that Bentley enjoyed smoking with his constant companion (Dr. Walker); a practice which he did not begin before his seventieth year; he is stated also to have been an admirer of good port wine, while he thought contemptuously of claret; *which*, he said, *would be port if it could.* He generally wore, while sitting in his study, a hat with an enormous brim—as a shade to protect his eyes; and he affected more than ever a fashion of addressing his familiars with the singular pronouns *thou* and *thee.*"

There is, it seems, a tradition in Cambridge that Bentley was accustomed to describe himself as likely to attain the age of fourscore years; but on what particular ground is not said. In making this remark, he would observe, by way of parenthesis, that a life of that duration was long enough to read everything worth reading; and then, reverting to the period he had anticipated for himself, he would conclude—

"Et tunc magna mei sub terris ibit imago."

If this anticipation were really made by Bentley, it is a remarkable instance of that unaccountable spirit of divination which has haunted some people (Lord Nelson, for instance, in the obstinate prediction before his final victory —*that the 21st of October would be his day*); Bentley *did* accomplish his eightieth year, and a few months more. About the 10th of July, he was seized with what is supposed to have been a pleuritic fever. Dr. Heberden, at that time a young physician in Cambridge, for some reason not stated (perhaps the advanced age of the patient), declined to bleed him—a measure which Bentley himself suggested, and which is said to have been considered necessary by Dr. Wallis. That the indications of danger were sudden and of

rapid progress is probable from the fact that Dr. Wallis, who was summoned from Stamford, arrived too late. Bentley expired on the 14th of July 1742; and in his person England lost the greatest scholar by far that she ever has produced; greater than she *will* again produce, according to all likelihood, under the tendencies of modern education. Some account of his principal works, and a general estimate of his services to literature, and of his character and pretensions as a scholar, I reserve to a separate section.

Part II

The age is past in which men rendered a cheerful justice to the labours of the classical scholar. Joseph Scaliger, Isaac Casaubon, and the monster of erudition, Claudius Salmasius, are supposed by multitudes of sciolists to have misdirected their powers. In that case Richard Bentley must submit to the same award. Yet it would perhaps be no difficult achievement to establish a better apology for the classical student than is ever contemplated by those who give the tone to the modern fashion in education.

What it is proposed to *substitute* for classical erudition we need not too rigorously examine. Some acquaintance with the showy parts of Experimental Philosophy and Chemistry—a little *practical* Mathematics—a slight popular survey of History and Geography—a sketch of empirical Political Economy—a *little* Law—a *little* Divinity—perhaps even a *little* Medicine and Farriery: such are the elements of a fashionable education. All that is really respectable in a scheme of this complexion, the mathematics and the mechanical philosophy, judging by the evidence of the books which occasionally appear, should seem to be attained with any brilliant success only in that university (Cambridge) where these studies are pursued jointly with the study of classical literature. The notion of any hostility, therefore, between the philological researches of the Greek and Latin literator, on the one hand, and the severe meditations, on the other, of the geometrician and the inventive analyst—such a hostility as could make it necessary to weigh the one against the other—is, in practice, found to be

imaginary. No *comparative* estimate, then, being called for, we may confine ourselves to a simpler and less invidious appreciation of classical erudition upon the footing of its *absolute* pretensions.

Perhaps a judicious pleading on this subject would pursue something of the following outline:—

First, it is undeniable that the progress of *sacred* literature is dependent upon that of profane. The vast advances made in biblical knowledge, and in other parts of divinity, since the era of the Reformation, are due, in a great proportion, to the *general* prosecution of classical learning. It is in vain to attempt a distinction between the useful parts of this learning and the ornamental: all are useful; all are necessary. The most showy and exquisite refinements in the doctrine of Greek choric metre, even where they do not directly avail us in expelling anomalies of syntax or of idiom from embarrassed passages, and thus harmonising our knowledge of this wonderful language, yet offer a great indirect benefit: they exalt the standard of attainment, by increasing its difficulty and its compass; and a prize placed even at an elevation useless for itself becomes serviceable as a guarantee that all lower heights must have been previously traversed. Mark *that*, my dashing traducer of classic studies, and answer it at your "earliest convenience."

Secondly, the general effect upon the character of young men from a classical education is pretty much like that which is sought for in travelling; more unequivocally even than *that*, coming at the age which is best fitted for receiving deep impressions, it liberalises the mind. This effect is derived in part from the ennobling tone of sentiment which presides throughout the great orators, historians, and *litterateurs* of antiquity; and in part it is derived from the vast *difference* in temper and spirit between the modern (or Christian) style of thinking and that which prevailed under a Pagan religion, connected, in its brightest periods, with republican institutions. The mean impression from *home-keeping*, and the contracted views of a mere personal experience, are thus, as much as by any other conceivable means, broken and defeated. Edmund Burke has noticed the illiberal air which is communicated to the mind by an

education exclusively scientific, even where it is more radical and profound than it is ever likely to be under those theories which reject classical erudition. The sentiments which distinguish a *gentleman* receive no aid from any attainments in science; but it is certain that familiarity with the classics, and the noble direction which they are fitted to impress upon the thoughts and aspirations, *do* eminently fall in with the few other chivalrous sources of feeling that survive at this day. It is not improbable, also, that a reflection upon the "uselessness" of such studies, according to the estimate of coarse utilitarians—that is, their inapplicability to any object of mercenary or mechanic science—co-operates with their more direct influences in elevating the taste. *To be useless* is not unfrequently a gorgeous emblazonry of honour on the very face and frontispiece of difficult accomplishments. Thence we may explain the reason of the universal hatred amongst plebeian and coarse-minded Jacobins to studies and institutions which point in this direction. They hate the classics for the same reason that they hate the manners of chivalry, or the characteristic distinctions of a gentleman.

Thirdly, a sentiment of just respect belongs to the classical scholar, if it were only for the numerical *extent* of the items which compose the great total of his knowledge. In separate importance the acquisitions of the mathematician transcend *his;* each several proposition in that region of knowledge has its distinct value and dignity. But in the researches of the scholar, more conspicuously than in any other whatsoever, the details are truly and literally without end. Simply on that basis, simply for the *infinity* of separate acts on the part of the memory and the understanding which must be presumable in any extensive scholarship, even if otherwise each act for itself separately were less important, the scholar or poly-histor has a special station of honour.

Fourthly, the *difficulty*, as derived from peculiar idiom and construction, of the two classical languages of antiquity, more especially the Greek, is in itself a test of very unusual talent. Modern languages are learned inevitably by simple efforts of memory, or of pure parrot-like imitation. And, if

the learner benefits by a rational plan of tuition—viz. falls under the tuition of circumstances which oblige him to speak the language, and to hear it spoken, for all purposes of daily life—there is perhaps no living idiom in Europe which would not be mastered in three months. Certainly, there is none which presupposes any peculiar talent as a *conditio sine quâ non* for its attainment. Greek *does;* and I affirm peremptorily that none but a man of singular talent can attain (what, after all, goes but a small way in the accomplishments of a scholar) the power of reading Greek fluently at sight. The difficulty lies in two points: first, in the peculiar perplexities of the Greek construction; and, secondly, in the continual inadequation (to use a logical term) of Greek to modern terms: a circumstance which makes literal translation impossible, and reduces the translator to a continued effort of compensation. Upon a proper occasion, it would be easy to illustrate this point. Meantime the fact must strike everybody, be the explanation what it may, that very few persons ever *do* arrive at any tolerable skill in the Greek language. After seven years' application to it, most people are still alarmed at a sudden summons to translate a Greek quotation; it is almost ill-bred to ask for such a thing; and we may appeal to the candour of those even who, upon a case of necessity, are able to "do the trick," whether, in reading a Greek book of history for their own private amusement, they do not court the assistance of the Latin version at their side. Greek rarely becomes as familiar as Latin. And, as the modes of teaching them are pretty much the same, there is no way of explaining this but by supposing a difficulty *sui generis* in the Greek language, and a talent *sui generis* for contending with it.

Upon some such line of argument as I have here sketched—illustrating the claims of the classical student according to the several grounds now alleged—viz. 1, the difficulty of his attainments in any exquisite form; 2, their vast extent; 3, their advantageous tendency for impressing an elevated tone upon the youthful mind; and 4, their connexion with the maintenance of that "*strong book-mindedness*" and massy erudition which are the buttresses of a reformed church, and which failing (if they ever *should* fail) will

leave it open to thousands of factious schisms,—possibly a fair pleader might make out a case, stronger than a modern education-monger could retort, for the scholar, technically so called: meaning the man who has surrendered his days and nights to Greek, Latin, or the Biblical languages, and to the researches, more multitudinous than the sands of the seashore, for which those languages are the only portals.

Such a scholar, and modelled upon the most brilliant conception of his order, was Bentley. Wisely concentrating his exertions, under a conviction that no length of life or reach of faculties was sufficient to exhaust that single department which he cultivated, he does not appear to have carried his studies, in any instance, beyond it. Whatsoever more he knew, he knew in a popular way; and doubtless for much of that knowledge he was indebted to conversation. Carried by his rank and ecclesiastical preferments (and, from a very early age, by the favour of Bishop Stillingfleet) into the best society, with so much shrewd sense, and so powerful a memory, he could not but bear away with him a large body of that miscellaneous knowledge which floats upon the surface of social intercourse. He was deficient, therefore, in no information which naturally belongs to an English gentleman. But the whole of it, if we except, perhaps, that acquaintance with the English law, and the forms of its courts, which circumstances obliged him to cultivate, was obtained in his hours of convivial relaxation; and rarely indeed at the sacrifice of a single hour which, in the distribution of his time, he had allotted to the one sole vocation of his life—the literature of classical antiquity. How much he accomplished in that field will be best learned from a *catalogue raisonné* of his works (including his contributions to the works of others), and from a compressed abstract of that principal work to which he is indebted for much of the lustre which still settles upon his memory.

His *coup d'essai* in literature, his inaugural effort, as I have already mentioned, was his appendix to the "Chronicle of Malelas." It was written in the winter of 1690, but not published until June 1691. Bentley was at this time twenty-nine years old, and could not therefore benefit by

any consideration of his age. But he needed no indulgences. His epistle travels over a prodigious extent of ground, and announces everywhere a dignified self-respect, combined with respect for others. In all that relates to the Greek dramatic poets,—Euripides, in particular,—and in the final disquisition (which I have already analysed) on the laws which govern the Latinisation of Grecian proper names, the appendix to Malelas is still worthy of most attentive study.

He soon after began to prepare editions of Philostratus, of Hesychius, and of the Latin poet Manilius. From these labours he was drawn off, in 1692, by his first appointment to preach the Boyle Lecture. Those sermons are published. They were serviceable to his reputation at that time, and are still worthy of their place as the inaugural dissertations in that distinguished series of English divinity. It would be idle to describe them as in any eminent sense philosophical; they are not so ; but they present as able a refutation of the infidel notions then prevalent,[1] and (in the two latter lectures) as popular an application to the same purpose of the recent Newtonian discoveries, as the times demanded, or a miscellaneous audience permitted.

In 1694 Bentley was again appointed to preach the Boyle Lecture : but his sermons on that occasion have not been printed. On various pleas he delayed preparing them for the press so long that, before he found himself at leisure for that task, the solicitations of his friends had

[1] Misled by Dr. Monk (who, though citing the passage from Bentley's letters about the Hobbists, yet, in the preceding page, speaks of "the doctrines of *Spinoza*," as having contributed to taint the principles of many in the higher classes), I had charged Bentley with the common error of his order, in supposing a book so rare as the "B. D. S. Opera Posthuma" to have been, by possibility, an influential one in England. But I now find, on consulting Dr. Burney's collection of Bentley's letters (p. 146 of the Leipsic edition, 1825), that Bentley expressly avowed my own view of the case. His words to Dr. Bernard are as follows :—"But are the atheists of your mind, that they have no books written for them ? Not one of them but believes Tom Hobbes to be a rank one ; and that his corporeal God is a mere sham to get his book printed. I have said something to this in my first sermon, and I know it to be true by the conversation I have had with them. *There may be some Spinozists, or immaterial fatalists, beyond seas ; but not one English infidel in a hundred is other than a Hobbist.*"

languished, and his own interest in the work had probably died away. Seventy-nine years ago, when the Life of Bentley was published in the "Biographia Britannica," they were still in existence; but his present biographer has not been able to ascertain their subsequent fate.

By this time the Philostratus was ready for the press, but an accident put an end to that undertaking. The high duties upon paper, and other expenses of printing in England, had determined Bentley to bring out his edition at Leipsic; and accordingly one sheet was printed in that university. But Bentley, who had the eye of an amateur for masterly printing and the other luxuries of the English and Dutch press, was so much disgusted with the coarseness of this German specimen that he peremptorily put an end to the work, and transferred his own collations of two Oxford MSS. to Olearius of Leipsic. In the edition published by this person in 1709 there will be found so much of Bentley's notes as were contained in the specimen sheet; these, however, extend no farther than page 11; and what has become of the rest—a matter of some interest to myself—it has become impossible to learn.

In 1695 Bentley assisted his zealous friend Evelyn in the revision of his "Numismata."

In July 1696, on taking his doctor's degree, Bentley maintained three separate theses: one "On the Rationality of the Mosaic Cosmogony and Deluge"; a second "On the Divine Origin of the Christian Miracles"; and a third "On the Relation between the Christian and Platonic Trinities." These themes (at any rate the last) appear to me somewhat above the reach of Bentley's philosophy, or indeed of any English philosophy since the days of Henry More, Cudworth, and Stillingfleet. The last of these persons, however, his own friend and patron, had no doubt furnished Bentley with directions and materials for treating the question. This dissertation it would be delightful to read; but it seems to have vanished as completely as the public breakfast which accompanied it. On the Sunday following he preached before the university what is called the Commencement Sermon ("Of Revelation and the Messiah"). Many years afterwards, this was added as an appropriate sequel to an

edition of his Boyle Lectures in 1692. It is a powerful and learned (however imperfect) defence of the Christian faith, and of its founder's claim to the character of the Jewish Messiah.

Meantime, his professional exertions had not abated his zeal for literature. In the course of this year he finished his notes and emendations to the text of Callimachus. These, together with a complete digest of that poet's fragments, admirably corrected, he transmitted to his learned friend Grævius of Utrecht, for the improvement of what may be called a Variorum Callimachus, which Grævius was then carrying through the press. This had been originally projected, and some part already printed, by a son of Grævius, who died prematurely. In the very first letter of Grævius, September 17, 1692,[1] thus much had been explained to Bentley, and that amongst the ornaments of the edition would be a copious commentary by Ezechiel Spanheim, a distinguished Prussian, envoy at one time to England from the Court of Berlin, and, next after Bentley, perhaps, the best Grecian of the age. Dressed in this pomp of learned apparel, the muse of Callimachus came forth with unexpected splendour: *pars minima est ipsa puella sui*—(*"the least part of the attractions lay in the central object itself"*); and Bentley was perhaps sincere in assuring Grævius (15th February 1698) that, according to the judgment of one learned friend, no writer of antiquity had been so richly endowed with editorial services.

In May 1697 was published the original Dissertation on

[1] Of all biographers, Dr. Monk is the most perversely obscure in fixing dates. As one instance, at p. 21, I defy any critic to explain the reference of the words—"This happened in the latter part of 1690." *What* happened? The words immediately preceding are, "that Bentley should publish his remarks on Malelas." Naturally, therefore, every reader would understand the reference as pointing to the actual publication of those remarks; but in the middle of the next page he finds that this did not occur until June 1691. Here, again, with respect to Callimachus, the wit of man could not make out, from the sentence which opens chapter V, whether the publication took place in the August of 1696 or of 1697. But by a letter of Grævius, dated on the 6th of September 1697, and stating that he had three weeks before despatched six copies of the Callimachus as presents to Bentley, I, the writer of this biographical sketch, ascertain that 1697 was the true date.

Phalaris, as a supplement to the second edition of Wotton's "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning." By way of suitable accompaniments, were added shorter dissertations on the spurious Letters of Themistocles, Socrates, and Euripides, and, finally, on the Fables, and the personal deformity, imputed to Æsop. At the beginning of 1699 appeared the second (or complete) Dissertation on Phalaris; from which (on account of the great expansion given to the principal theme) all supplementary parts were now unavoidably retrenched.

Soon after this period, the manifold business which occupied Bentley, upon his promotion to the headship of Trinity College, Cambridge, and upon various university appointments, appears to have interrupted his literary pursuits; and perhaps he surrendered himself the more tractably to these avocations from the ordinary tenor of his life, in consideration of that excessive price which now affected English paper. Already in 1698 this exorbitant price had seemed to Bentley, and had been formally alleged in his letters to Græevius, as a sufficient motive for *then* (*i.e.* provisionally) renouncing the press.[1] However, when he did not work himself, he was

[1] It is to be observed that Bentley had one reason more than most authors for giving weight to this consideration, and a reason honourable to his æsthetic sensibility: he was peculiarly affected by typographic beauty. Next after the beauty of woman ranked in his estimate the beauty of a finely-printed book. One literary man I have personally known and loved, as indeed he was most worthy to be loved, who rivalled Bentley in his enthusiasm for that supreme of luxuries—a finely-printed book. It was Robert Southey. And it may be seen, by looking back to such of his early works as he had an opportunity of at all controlling, through his residence on the spot and his personal intimacy with the printer, what a just conception he had of various ideals in this art, especially of a title-page in its severe classical simplicity and beauty of proportions. Bentley, with the same sensitive eye for chaste typographic beauty (and anticipating Southey, by the way, in his love for a sparing use of the old black-letter types in suitable situations, together with many ornamental devices of the great old patriarchs of the art—the Venetian Aldi, the Parisian Stephani, the Juntæ, the Dutch Elzevirs, &c.), had, for this very reason, an instinct of horror and hatred for anything tending to enhance the cost of paper: for concurrently with *that* would rise again the old original enemy of printing. Thousands of years had that very cause fought against the birth of any diffusive literature; and, if again it should prevail, farewell to books, except as costly rarities, on a level with diamonds and rubies. Strange it is, and awful to think of, upon

always ready to assist those who did; and in 1701 we find him applying his whole academic influence to the promotion of the Prussian (Kuster's) edition of Suidas,—which he enriched partly from the MSS. of the deceased Bishop Pearson, and partly from his own stores.

In the summer of the year 1702 Bentley first formed the design of editing a body of classics for the use of the students in his own college; and a Horace, which occupied him at intervals for the next ten years, was selected as the leader of the series.

In 1708, by way of assisting his old friend, Ludolf Kuster, in a hasty edition of Aristophanes, he addressed to him three critical epistles on the "Plutus" and the "Clouds." These were dislocated and mangled by Kuster, under the pressure of haste and the unfortunate arrangements of the printer. Two, however, of the three have been preserved and published exactly as Bentley wrote them; and in this instance I am happy to agree with Dr. Monk that these letters (and, I may add, the general tone, and much of the peculiar merit which belongs to the Phalaris Dissertation) point out Aristophanes, beyond all other writers of antiquity, as that one who would have furnished the fullest arena for Bentley's various and characteristic attainments. About the same time Bentley had the honour of giving a right direction to the studies of Tiberius Hemsterhuis, the founder of a distinguished school of continental scholars, whose metrical deficiencies had been made known by his recent edition of Julius Pollux. The two letters of Bentley have since been published by Ruhnken.

In the year 1709 he assisted Davies in his edition of the Tusculan Questions of Cicero by a large body of admirable emendations; and in the same year he communicated to Needham, who was then editing Hierocles, a collection of conjectures on the text of that author, which, though not equally sound, have the unfailing Bentleian merit of extraordinary ingenuity.

what slender causes are suspended the mightiest of destinies. Let a particular current from the far south-west alter its direction, and the climate of our British Isles is ruined. Let the cotton-plant droop like the potato, and gone is the political supremacy of England. Let the constituents of paper become permanently retrograde in quantity, and simultaneously would all literature decay.

It is one illustration of the universal favour which Bentley extended to the interests of knowledge, even in those departments which promised no glory to himself, that he had long laboured to obtain a second and improved edition of Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia." Sir Isaac, however, was at this time engrossed by his employments at the Mint; but at length, in this year (1709), Bentley had the satisfaction of engaging Professor Cotes in that task, and of opening a long correspondence[1] between the professor and Sir Isaac, which arranged the whole alterations and additions.

In the spring of 1710 was published one of Bentley's occasional works, which caused at that time, and yet continues to cause, some speculation. An unexplained mystery hung even then over the mode of publication, and a mystery still hangs over its motive. In the latter end of 1709 the well-known Clericus, or Le Clerc, whose general attainments Dr. Monk rates far too highly, published an edition of the Fragments of Menander and Philemon, with a brutish ignorance of Greek. Simple ignorance, however, and presumption cannot be supposed sufficient to have provoked Bentley, who uniformly left such exposures to the inevitable hand of time. Yet so it was that, in December of the same year, Bentley sat down and wrote extemporal emendations on three hundred and twenty-three passages in the Fragments, with a running commentary of unsparing severity upon the enormous blunders of Le Clerc. This little work, by a circuitous channel, in the spring of 1710, he conveyed into the hands of Peter Burman, the bitterest enemy of Le Clerc. It may readily be conceived that Burman, thirsty as he was at that particular moment for vengeance, received with a frenzy of joy these thunderbolts from the armoury of Jove. He published the work immediately, under the title of "Emendationes in Menandri et Philemonis Reliquias, *auctore Phileleuthero Lipsiensi*," and with an insulting preface of his own. Before the press had completed its work, Le Clerc heard of the impending castigation. The author's name also was easily guessed in the small list of Greek scholars, even amongst

[1] This correspondence is still preserved in Trinity College, and I am sure that every reader will join me heartily in praying for its publication.

those who might not recognise in *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis* an avowed pseudonym of Bentley's. Le Clerc—who himself conducted a severe review, and thought it perfectly fair that he, seating himself on a critical judgment-seat, should periodically pronounce damnatory sentences upon learned contemporaries, but viewed it as an offence calling for the magistrate's interference if any of these insulted authors should quietly retaliate—on this occasion wrote in his usual spirit of dictatorial insolence to Bentley, calling upon him to disavow so shocking an attack. Bentley replied by calmly pointing out to him his presumption as an editor of Grecian literature, and his arrogant puerility as a bully. Meantime the book was published, and read with so much avidity (although in a learned language), that in three weeks the entire impression was exhausted. Received with gratitude and enthusiasm by the rest of the world, the book met with a natural assailant in the old hornet James Gronovius, who hated Le Clerc and Bentley with an equal hatred, and also in the scoundrel De Pauw. But, said Bentley, with the most happy application of a line from Phædrus, "Nondum eorum ictus tanti facio ut iterum a me vapulent:

Multo majoris colaphi mecum veneunt."

On the 8th December 1711 Bentley put the finishing hand to his edition of Horace—the most instructive, perhaps, in its notes, of all contributions whatsoever to Latin literature. The attacks which it provoked were past counting; the applauses were no less vehement from every part of Europe; and, amongst others, from an old enemy—Atterbury, the ringleader in the Phalaris controversy. A second and improved impression of the work was immediately called for, and issued from the press of Amsterdam.

In 1713 Bentley replied, under his former signature of *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, to Anthony Collins's "Discourse of Freethinking." His triumph, in this instance, was owing less to his own strength than to the weakness of his antagonist. Collins had some philosophical acuteness, as he showed elsewhere; but of learning, properly so called, he had none. The most useful service which Bentley rendered to the public on this occasion was the just colouring which he gave to an

argument for impeaching the credit of the New Testament, recently impressed upon the timid and the scrupulous by the notoriety of Dr. Mill's labours upon its text. Many pious people had been scandalised and alarmed by a body of thirty thousand various readings in a text issuing (as some churches hold) from inspiration. But Bentley reassured their trembling faith by the simple logic of distinguishing and sorting the cases: in the first place, an immense majority of these variations scarcely affected the sense at all; and, secondly, of those which did, few would be found to disturb any cardinal doctrine; which, thirdly, after all, was otherwise secured by unsuspected passages. It is an interesting reflection to us at this day that the Collins here refuted was that friend of Locke (as appears from his letters, originally published by Des Maizeaux) upon whom he lavished every proof of excessive regard in the last moments of his life. Locke, who believed himself, and was accepted by the world as, in some sense a champion of the Christian faith by his somewhat irreligious little book on the "Reasonableness of Christianity," presented this Collins with the most flattering recommendations to his hostess, Lady Masham, the daughter of that Cudworth who had spent his life in the refutation of philosophic sceptics and philosophic scepticism.[1]

In 1715, on occasion of the first Pretender's expedition, Bentley preached before the university a sermon on Popery, which, though merely occasional, ranks amongst the most powerful expositions of the corruptions introduced into pure Christianity by that stupendous power. The force of its natural and manly rhetoric may be conceived from this fact (if accurately stated), that Sterne, the wholesale plagiarist, has borrowed from it a long passage for the sermon put into the mouth of Corporal Trim, who is made to express its terrible energy by saying that "he would not read another line of it for all the world."

[1] Collins wanted something more than piety; he was not even an honest man; for he reprinted his work in Holland, purified from the gross cases of ignorance exposed by Bentley; and then, circulating this improved edition among his friends in England,—which he had taken care to mask by a lying title-page,—he persuaded them that the passages in question were mere forgeries of Bentley's. This is almost the exact villainy of Lauder in the next generation.

On the 15th of April 1716 Bentley, in a letter to Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, brought forward a scheme, which of itself should have immortalised him, for retrieving the original text of the New Testament *exactly as it was at the time of the Council of Nice*, without the difference of "twenty words" or "even twenty particles." Compressed within a few words, his plan was this:—Mill, and other collectors of various readings, had taken notice only of absolute differences in the *words*—never of mere variations in their *order and arrangement;* these they conceived to be purely accidental. Bentley thought otherwise; for he had noticed that, wherever he could obtain the genuine reading of the old authorised Latin version, technically called the *Vulgate*, the order of the words exactly corresponded to the order of the original Greek. This pointed to something more than accident. A sentence of St. Jerome ripened this suspicion into a certainty. Hence it occurred to him that, if by any means he could retrieve the true text of the Latin Vulgate, as it was originally reformed and settled by St. Jerome, he would at once obtain a guide for selecting, amongst the crowd of variations in the present Greek text, that one which St. Jerome had authenticated as the reading authorised long before his day. Such a restoration of the Vulgate Bentley believed to be possible by means of MSS. of which the youngest should reach an age of nine hundred years. Dated from Bentley's day at the opening of the eighteenth century (say 1701, when he was in his fortieth year), such a MS. would have carried us back within seven centuries of the apostolic age. How far this principle of restoration could have been practically carried through is a separate question; but, for the principle itself, I take upon myself to say that a finer thought does not occur in the records of inventive criticism. It involves no single act of conjectural sagacity, but a systematic train of such acts.

In the same year Bentley wrote a letter to Biel upon the scriptural glosses in our present copies of Hesychius, which he considered interpolations from a later hand. This letter, which evidences the same critical acquaintance with Hesychius as, in the aids given to his friend Kuster, he had already manifested with Suidas, has been published by

Alberti in the Prolegomena to his edition of that lexicographer.

In this year also a plan was agitated (according to one tradition, by the two Chief Justices, Parker and King) for an edition of the Classics *in usum Principis Frederici.* Such a project could not fail to suggest a competition with the famous French series *in usum Delphini.* Difficulty there was none in making the English one far more learned; and, with that view, it was designed that Bentley should preside over the execution. For this service he is said to have demanded £1000 *per annum* for life; on the other hand, Lord Townshend, by the same account, would give no more than £500. Some misunderstanding arose; and, finally, the whole plan was dismissed by the court, in company with the liberal minister who had entertained it.

In 1717 Bentley preached before the king. This sermon was published, and is described by Dr. Monk as being, perhaps, not worse calculated to win the favourable opinion of general readers than anything else which its author has left. For myself, I have not been so fortunate as to meet with it.

Not long after, in the same year, Bentley was elected the Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge. On the 1st of May, the day preceding his election, he delivered his probationary lecture. The subject, even more than the occasion, made this so interesting that we do not hear without indignation of the uncertainty which all parties profess with regard to a copy of it known to have been in existence forty years ago. The lecture treated the famous question of the disputed passage on the Three Heavenly Witnesses (1 Epist. of St. John v. 7). Porson, to whom such a lecture must have been peculiarly interesting, had read it; so had Dr. Vincent, the late Dean of Westminster. Could neither of these gentlemen have copied it? Or, if that were forbidden, could they not have mastered the outline of the arguments? Or could neither have anticipated the pious fraud executed some sixty or seventy years later by Barthélemy (Anacharsis the Younger), who, by pleading a necessity for withdrawing suddenly, obtained time for "getting by heart" an important MS. which he was not allowed to copy?

Meantime, as to the result, everybody is agreed that Bentley peremptorily rejected the verse. Yet, in a correspondence with some stranger, which has been since published, Bentley is less positive on that matter, and avows his determination to treat the case, not as a question for critical choice and sagacity, but simply as a question of fact, to be decided by the balance of readings, as he should happen to find them on this side or that in the best MSS. "What will be the event," he says, "I myself know not yet; having not used all the old copies I have information of." Within the four months' interval between this correspondence and his probationary lecture it is improbable that Bentley should have made any such progress in his Greek Testament as could materially affect his view of this question; and I infer from that consideration that, in his lecture, he must have treated it purely as a question for sagacity and tentative conjecture, not for positive evidence. This latter mode of deciding the case, by which he promised his correspondent that he would finally abide, remains therefore unaffected by the award of his lecture. I agree with Dr. Middleton, the first Bishop of Calcutta, that the controversy is not yet exhausted. In the following month (June 1717), he delivered his inaugural oration, which lasted for two hours and a-half, on entering upon the duties of his chair. This, which unfortunately has not been preserved, except in the slight and sneering sketch of an enemy, appears to have been chiefly an apologetic account of his whole literary career; doubtless for the purpose of disarming the general presumption that a course of study which had been so peculiarly directed to what, in the old university phrase, are called the *humanities* of literature, could not but have impressed a bias upon his inquiries unfavourable to the austerer researches of *divinity*. He reminded his audience, however, that he had been appointed on two separate occasions a public champion of Christianity, and that, in another instance, when he had stepped forward as a volunteer in the same august service, he had earned the solemn thanks of the university.

In 1718, Bentley resumed, but suddenly and finally discontinued, the third part of his answer to Collins. He had agreed to pursue it at the particular request of the Princess

of Wales (afterwards Queen Caroline); and two half-sheets were actually printed; but, conceiving himself ill-treated by the court, he protested that he would do nothing to gratify those who behaved no better than his declared enemies.

Meantime he had been prosecuting his great scheme for the restoration of the Nicene text of the New Testament, according to the opportunities of leisure which his public duties allowed him, with his usual demoniac energy, and with a generous disregard of expense. Through different agents, he had procured collations of MSS. all over Europe; and, in particular, had maintained a correspondence with the Benedictines of St. Maur, one extract from which has been published by Sabatier, in his "Bibliorum Sacrorum Versiones Antiquæ." By the autumn of 1720 his work was so far advanced that, in October, he issued a formal prospectus, stating its plan (as originally sketched, in the spring of 1716, to the Archbishop of Canterbury), its form and price, and the literary aids which he counted upon. The twenty-second chapter of the Revelations accompanied these proposals, as a specimen not of the paper or printing (which were to be the best that Europe afforded), but of the editorial management. And, with that just appreciation of his own merits which the honest frankness of Bentley would seldom allow him to suppress, he solemnly consecrated the work "*as a κειμήλιον, a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεὶ, a charter, a Magna Charta, to the whole Christian Church; to last when all the ancient MSS. may be lost and extinguished.*" Conyers Middleton, incapable of understanding this grand burst of enthusiasm, immediately wrote a pamphlet to disparage the project, which he stigmatised (in allusion to the South Sea schemes, so recently exposed) as *Bentley's Bubble.* One instance will explain the character of his malice: he made it a theme for scurrilous insinuations against Bentley that he published by subscription. Now, in any age, an expensive undertaking, which presupposes a vast outlay for the collation [1] (or occasionally for the purchase) of

[1] Bentley had paid Wetstein £50 for the collation of a single Palimpsest; which sum, in relation to the vast extent of the MS., seems to us, with Dr. Monk's leave, a trifle; though, in relation to Bentley's purse, and the many demands upon it of the same nature, and his prospects of remuneration, it might be a very large one.

MSS. and rare editions, is a privileged case as respects subscriptions; but in that age everybody published by subscription. Pope did so, as every man tinctured with literature knows circumstantially, and in that way made his fortune by the "Iliad." The wrath of Achilles and the siege of Troy might be damaging to Hector, to Sarpedon, to Achilles himself, and to many another hero, but it was the making of Pope; and his Twickenham villa was paid for by Helen of Greece. And, what marks the climax[1] in Middleton's baseness, *he himself published his knavish "Life of Cicero,"* in the most deliberate manner, *upon the ordinary terms of a subscription.* Early in January 1721 appeared a caustic reply to Middleton's pamphlet, which, upon internal evidence, is, and was, ascribed to Bentley. In about three months Middleton retorted in a pamphlet four times as long as his first, and openly avowing himself by name as the author. These pamphlets I have read; for they are printed in a quarto republication of Middleton's Miscellanies. And I am bold to say, in opposition to Dr. Monk, that they offer no shadow of sound or scholar-like objection to Bentley's *Programme.* That was written in one evening by candlelight. Why not? It fell into no real error by its precipitancy. Cavils are the best of Middleton's argument; malice his best inspiration; and, as to the beautiful style, which (according to old traditional criticism) Dr. Monk attributes to Middleton, I presume that many of equal merit are sold daily at sixpence a-pound to trunk-makers and pastrycooks.

It was the fate of Dr. Bentley that every work executed or projected by him should be assailed. Accordingly, on this occasion, concurrently with the pamphlets of Middleton, appeared many others, with or without names, English and Latin, virulent or gentle. To Middleton, however, has always been imputed the honour of having crushed the project; how erroneously, we now first learn from Dr. Monk. Bentley could not be disturbed by what he had not seen

[1] This is the climax in relation to his tauntings of Bentley: else there was a worse climax as regarded Middleton's character. The valuable part of his Cicero was that part which he had stolen from the Scotchman, Bellenden; and this Scotchman he had the baseness never once to mention.

now, he declared to Bishop Atterbury that he "scorned to read the rascal's book"; and there is full proof that, for eight years and upwards after these attacks, he procured collations as zealously as ever,—that is, he persevered as ardently as before in his costly preparations for the work. The subscriptions, again, which are stated to have been not less than two thousand guineas, show that purchasers were undeterred by the clamours of malice. However, the fact is that the work *did* at length languish, but for what reason is still doubtful. Wetstein, in his "Prolegomena," says that the abandonment of the work rose out of Bentley's disgust at the meanness of the Treasury in refusing to remit the duty upon the paper for this national undertaking. The facts are truly stated; but we have proof that the effect was insufficient to retard his labour "even for a day." The best guess I can offer to account for the final wreck of so much labour and expense is that, being continually withdrawn from Bentley's attention, by the perplexities of his multiplied lawsuits, until the shades of old age had overtaken him, the work gradually ceased to occupy his thoughts, or to interest his ambition.

During the long vacation of 1722 Bentley read a copy of Nicander's "Theriaca," put into his hands by Dr. Mead, and wrote his corrections on the margin. These have since been published by Dr. Monk in the "Cambridge Museum Criticum."

In 1723, the edition of the Tusculan Questions by Davies, to which Bentley had communicated its original value, was reprinted. On this occasion, he again enriched it with an ample dowry of his own conjectural emendations. These it was his intention to support by notes. Unfortunately, a pressure of business had preoccupied his attention at the critical moment; the press could not wait; and the book was launched, leaving the best part of its freight behind, and that part, unfortunately, without which the rest was of little value.

In 1724, Dr. Hare, Dean of Worcester, originally a confidential friend of Bentley's, who had on three several occasions injured him by his indiscretion or his meanness, consummated his offences by an act of perfidious dishonesty: he published an edition of Terence, in which everything merit-

orious was borrowed without acknowledgment from the colloquial instructions of Bentley, imperfectly apprehended, and clumsily explained. In revenge for this treachery, Bentley carried rapidly through the press a Terence of his own; and, by way of anticipating Hare, who had announced a Phædrus, he united an edition of that author (connected, as usual, with P. Syrus) in the same volume. This was published at the beginning of 1726. The Phædrus was a precipitate,—in fact, an extempore performance; but the Terence is, in my opinion, of all Bentley's editions, the most brilliantly finished. With relation to the critic, undoubtedly his Horace is by much the most elaborately learned; but, with relation to the interests of the author, his Terence is the more comprehensively remounted as a new edifice.

In 1731 occurred an incident in the literary life of Bentley upon which no rational judgment has ever yet been pronounced. At the latter end of that year he undertook his edition of the "Paradise Lost"; it was carried on with his usual haste, and was published in January 1732. He was now seventy years old; and his age, combined with the apparent extravagance of some amongst his corrections, might seem, at first, to countenance Dr. Monk's insinuation of dotage.[1] But the case is totally misconceived. His edition of Milton had the same merits as his other editions; peculiar defects it had, indeed, from which his editions of Latin classics were generally free; these, however, were due to no decays in himself, but to original differences in the English classic from any which he could have met with in Pagan literature. The romantic, or Christian, poetry was alien to Bentley's taste; he had no more sense or organs of perception for this grander and more imaginative order of poetry than a screaming peacock may be supposed to have for the music of Mozart. Consequently, whatsoever was peculiarly characteristic in it

[1] Dr. Monk says, truly enough, though with miserable defect of energy, that Bentley's corrections would often "lop off the most beautiful parts of the poem." But I am petrified on finding the first instance which he gives—Bentley's very reasonable censure of a well known bull which all the world has laughed at:

> "Adam, the goodliest man of men since born
> His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve."

seemed to him a monstrous abortion; and, had it been possible that passages in the same impassioned key should occur in the austere and naked works of the Roman or Grecian muse, he would doubtless have proscribed them as interpolations of monks, copyists, or scholiasts, with the same *desperate hook*[1] which operated so summarily on the text of "Paradise Lost." With these infirmities, and this constitutional defect of poetic sensibility, the single blunder which he committed was in undertaking such a province. The management of it did him honour; for he complied honestly with the constitution of his own mind, and was right in the sense of taking a true view, though undoubtedly from a false station. Let not our gentle sisters, the womanhood of earth, take offence at what I am going to say. I have been assured by great mathematicians that nine parts in ten—which is a large percentage—of all the mischief moving upon earth has its root in some female caprice or female suggestion. And, without needing exotic information, I know by my own observations that, whenever a wise man plays the fool, we may suspect that a woman is at the bottom; and accordingly, for this blunder of Bentley's, we are to thank Queen Caroline, it seems,—who had a curiosity to see the English Hercules at work upon some task within her own range of sympathy; and, accordingly, with the same womanish folly which, in Queen Elizabeth, imposed upon Shakspere the grotesque labour of exhibiting Falstaff in love, she laid her commands upon Bentley for a kind of service which obliged him too frequently to abjure all his characteristic powers and accomplishments. That a suspicion at times crossed his own mind (his nephew's it certainly did) that for Her Majesty's amusement he was making himself into a comic performer, is very probable from his significant excuse at the end, "*Non*

[1] "And slashing Bentley with his desperate hook."—*Pope.*

There is also another explosion of Pope's assumed wrath against Bentley (for in downright earnest he felt none at all), which ends, I think—for I have no books to consult—in this way:—

"And shame the ribalds,
From slashing Bentley down to piddling Theobalds."

Pope's rival in editing Shakspere, painstaking but dull, was not Theobalds, but *Theobald,* and always pronounced *Tibbald.*

injussa cecini"—("the song which I have been singing was not a spontaneous movement, but imposed by authority"). Meantime, I agree altogether with Dr. Monk that to any *moral* blame in this affair, as connected with his creation of a visionary editor, Bentley is not liable, let Dr. Johnson say what he will. It was a fiction of modesty, at once, and of prudence, and not of fraud, which saved him from the necessity of applying his unmeasured abuse immediately to Milton. This middleman, the editorial man of straw,[1] was literally a mediator between Milton and the Bentleian wrath of damnation, which is already too offensive, even at present, when applied to a shadow.

This pantomime over, Bentley recoiled, with the spring of a Roman catapulta, to his natural pursuits. In 1732 he undertook an edition of Homer, chiefly with a view to the restoration of the digamma to its place and functions in the metre. This design he had first seriously adopted in 1726, and now, upon the instigation of Lord Carteret, he noted and corrected the entire "Iliad" and "Odyssey," rejecting those lines which would not bend to his hypothesis. The Homer was never published; but the MS., having been bequeathed in 1786 to Trinity College by Dr. R. Bentley, the nephew, was afterwards liberally transmitted to Gottingen, for the use of Heyne, who, in his own edition of Homer, acknowledged the profoundest obligations to it, and made the world circumstantially acquainted with its merits.

The Homer must be considered as virtually the final labour of Bentley; for his Manilius, which he published in 1739, when he was in his seventy-eighth year, had been, in fact, prepared for the press forty-five years before. The notes on this singular poem, which has always been as interesting to myself as it was to Bentley and to Joseph Scaliger, have the usual merits and the usual faults of Bentley's notes—being all defences of innovations on the

[1] "*Editorial man of straw*":—The reader must understand that Bentley, whilst retrenching many and long passages from the "Paradise Lost," on the pretence that they had been interpolated by some unknown person taking advantage of Milton's blindness, transforms this interpolator into a regular editor, though without a name, and in this way secures a subject for the volcanic torrent of his fury and disgust, without needing once to violate the majesty of the mighty poet.

received text, bold, plausible, original, or absolutely licentious, as may happen off and on under the singular temptations of the case. In Horace or Lucan we seek for no more; but I confess that, in a poem like the "Astronomicon," crowded with triple difficulties—of science, in the first place; secondly, of science disfigured by the perplexed hypothesis of the Roman astronomy; thirdly, of all this warped from its natural expression by the necessities of the metre and the ornaments of a poetic treatment—I read Bentley's philological notes with a sense of singular disadvantage after the philosophic commentaries of Joseph Scaliger. The astronomy has never been cleared up entirely, Scaliger having, in this part of science, committed singular errors. But much of the poem, which assigns the temperament, the bias of character, and involuntary (oftentimes unconscious) habits of men born under all the leading aspects of the stars, is less in need of elucidation, unless where it is particularly corrupt; and in such places Bentley is of great service.

Fourteen years after the death of Bentley, Horace Walpole published at his private press (known to bibliographic amateurs as the Strawberry-Hill Press) a Lucan, illustrated by the notes of Bentley, combined with those of Grotius. This poet was within Bentley's range of sympathy: and, as plausible conjectures for the emendation of the text, I know of nothing comparable to his suggestions.

Such is the long list of Bentley's literary labours, without including his speculations upon four separate Greek inscriptions, and perhaps other occasional assistances, as yet imperfectly ascertained, to his friends, which his generosity made him at all times no less ready to grant than the prodigality of inexhaustible wealth made him negligent to resume. I have also purposely excluded from my list the fugitive pamphlets of business, or of personal retaliation, by which Bentley met his ungenerous assailants; a part of his works which, as a good man, though with human infirmities, he would doubtless wish to be now cancelled or forgotten, under that comprehensive act of Christian forgiveness which there can be no doubt that, in his latter days, he extended even to the most unjust of those enmities which had pro-

voked them. Confining myself to his purely literary works, and considering the great care and attention which belong almost to each separate sentence in works of that class, I may perhaps say that, virtually, few men have written so much.

By way of bringing his characteristic merits within the horizon of the least learned readers, I will now lay before them a close analysis of his ablest and most famous performance, the "Phalaris"; and it happens favourably for this purpose, though singularly, that the most learned of Bentley's works is also that which is best fitted for intelligent popular admiration.

Phalaris has occasion to say that some worthy people in Sicily had been kind enough to promise him a loan; not, however, on any pastoral considerations, such as might seem agreeable to that age and country, but on the base Judean terms of *so much per shent* (*δανείσειν*). Here the forger of the Letters felt that it was indispensable to assign real names. Bills upon Simonides, indorsed by Pythagoras, would have been likely to fall to a discount in critical estimation, and to have damaged the credit of the *letters*. The contractors for his loan, therefore, are not humble individuals, but cities—Phintia, to wit, and Hybla. Well, and what of them? Were their acceptances likely to be protested for non-payment? By no means; both were probably solvent; and, at all events, their existence, which is *something*, is guaranteed by Ptolemy, by Antoninus, and by Pliny. "But," says Bentley (oh that ominous *but!*), "it is ill luck for this forger of letters that a fragment of Diodorus was preserved, to be a witness against him." From this little fragment, now raised up from the dust of ages, Bentley deduces a summary conviction of the forgery. This city of Phintia, in fact, had its name from the author of its existence, one Phintias: he was a petty prince, who flourished about the time of Pyrrhus the Epirot, and built the city in question during the 125th Olympiad[1]; that is to say, abiding by the chronology *most*

[1] Bentley, upon grounds which are satisfactory, and most elaborately developed, fixes the flourishing of Phalaris to the 57th Olympiad, which would make its date to be 550 years B.C. In this the reader

favourable to the authenticity of the Letters, above 270 years after Phalaris. "A pretty slip," says Bentley—"a pretty slip this of our Sophist, to introduce his tyrant borrowing money of a city almost 300 years before it was named or built!"

Such is the startling argument of Bentley. It will be admitted to be a knock-down blow; and, though only *one*, and applied to a single letter of the whole series, a candid looker-on will own that it is such a one as settles the business; and no prudent champion, however game, would have chosen to offer himself to the scratch for a second round. However, *οἱ περὶ τὸν Βοίλεα* thought otherwise.

The next argument is of the same description, being a second case of anachronism; but it merits a separate statement. In the instance of Phintia the proof was direct, and liable to no demur; but here the anachronism is made out circumstantially. Hence it is less readily apprehended; and the Boyle party, in their anger or their haste, did in fact misapprehend it; and upon their own blunder they built a charge against Bentley of vicious reasoning, which furnished an opening (not likely to be missed by *him*) for inflicting two courses of the knout instead of one. The case is this:—Stesichorus, the lyric poet, had incurred the displeasure of Phalaris, not for writing verses against him, but for overt acts of war; the poet had been levying money and troops, and, in fact, making hostile demonstrations at two separate places—*Aluntium* and *Alæsa.* Accordingly, Letter 92 takes him to task, and insinuates an ugly consequence—viz. the chance of being "snapt" (so Bentley calls it) by the bull[1]

may happen to know that he differed with that learned chronologist, but most confused writer, H. Dodwell. It is important, however, to remark that, logically speaking, it would be a *circle* (or *petitio principii*) to press Bentley with Dodwell's authority in this particular instance, inasmuch as Dodwell had, in fixing the era of Phalaris, mainly relied upon the very Letters in dispute, at that time unsuspected, or nearly so. That fact, important to Bentley, as disarming the chronological authority of Dodwell, is no less important as demonstrating that the question of Phalaris is not one of mere taste, but operatively connected with great historical results, as much so as any coin or architectural monument.

[1] "*The bull*":—It is necessary to explain, for the sake of those not acquainted with classical literature, that Phalaris, the Sicilian tyrant,

before he got safe home to Himera. The objection raised upon this passage regards Alæsa: Did that town exist so early as the days of Phalaris? No, says Bentley, nor for 140 years after Phalaris—having been founded by Archonides in the second year of the 94th Olympiad, consequently 140 years after the death of Phalaris, and then, upon a testimony which cannot be resisted by a Boyle man, viz. the testimony of these very Letters, 152 years *at the least* after this particular letter. But might there not be other cities, earlier than this, which bore the same name? There might—in fact there were. How, then, shall it be known whether that particular Alæsa which would involve the anachronism—viz. the Alæsa founded by Archonides—is the Alæsa of the Letter-writer? As the argument by which Bentley replies to this question has been much misconceived, and is in fact not very clearly stated in either dissertation, I shall throw it into a formal syllogism.

Major Proposition.—The Alæsa of the Pseudo-Phalaris and Stesichorus is the maritime Alæsa.

Minor Proposition.—But the maritime Alæsa is the Alæsa founded by Archonides.

Ergo.—The Alæsa of Archonides (viz. an Alæsa of nearly two centuries later than the era of Phalaris) is the Alæsa of the Pseudo-Phalaris.

For the circumstantial proof of major and minor, see Bentley.

Now comes a famous argument, in which Bentley makes play beautifully. Phalaris had been ill, and, wishing to reward his Greek physician in a manner suitable to a prince, amongst other presents he sends the doctor ποτηρίων θηρικλείων ζεύγη δέκα; *i.e.* ten couple, or pair, of Thericlæan cups. What manner of things were these? "They were," says Bentley, "large drinking-cups, of a peculiar shape, so called from the first contriver of them, one Thericles, a

about 500 years B.C., had a brazen bull, so contrived that, when heated as a furnace, it gave to the agonising cries of any victim shut up in its stomach a sound that mimicked a bull's bellowings. Tippoo Sahib, the forerunner and rehearser of Nena Sahib, had an artificial tiger worked by clock-work for the same hellish use.

Corinthian potter." Originally, therefore, as to the material, they must have been porcelain—or, however, earthenware of some quality or other (Pliny having by general consent tripped in supposing Thericles a turner). But, as often happens, in process of time "they were called Thericlæan from their *shape*, whatsoever artisan made them, and whether of earth, of wood, or of metal." So far well. But "there is another thing," says Bentley, "besides a pretty invention, very useful to a liar, and that is a good memory." For "the next thing to be inquired is, the age of this Thericles; and we learn *that* from Athenæus—one[1] witness, indeed, but as good as a multitude in a matter of this nature. "*This cup*," says he, "*was invented by Thericles, the Corinthian potter, who was contemporary with Aristophanes, the comedian.*"

This is enough. Bentley goes on to compute that all the surviving plays of Aristophanes range within a period of thirty-six years; so that, allowing the full benefit of this latitude to the Pseudo-Phalaris—viz. that Thericles invented his cups in the very *first* year of this period—still, even upon that concession, the very earliest baking of the potter's porcelain will be 120 years after the final baking of Phalaris himself.

This article in the first Dissertation was short; but the Oxford critique upon it furnished him with an occasion, and almost a necessity, for supporting it, in the second, with a *bravura* display of his learning upon all the collateral questions that had been connected with the main one. • And, as the attack had been in unusual terms of insolence (asking him, for instance, how he "durst" oppose men such as Grotius and Scaliger[2]), Bentley was under no particular

[1] There is, however, a collateral testimony from a poet contemporary with the old age of Thericles—viz. Eubulus—which gives a perfect confirmation to that of Athenæus. In the final Dissertation Bentley brought forward this fragment. In fact, the good luck of Bentley in meeting all the out-of-the-way evidence which he sometimes required is not less interesting and extraordinary than his skill in using it.

[2] This, by the way, shows the variety of hands employed in Boyle's book, and the dismal want of an editor to impress harmony upon the several contributors, and to force out the relations lurking amongst the various passages cited. Elsewhere, the Scaligers, and such people, are treated as pedants; so that perhaps the Boyles looked for an editor

obligation to use his opportunities with forbearance, or to moderate his triumph. This was complete. It is not Boyle, or his half-learned associates, but the very heroes of classical literature for the preceding 150 years—Scaliger, Grotius, Casaubon, Salmasius—who on this occasion (respectfully, but, as to the matter, effectually) are shown to be in error. Most readers are aware that, amongst the multifarious researches which belong to what is called learning, the *res metrica* has been developed more slowly than any other. The field, therefore, being so under-cultured, had naturally drawn the attention of an ambitious young scholar like Bentley; and, in his epistle to Mill upon John Malelas, he had already made his name illustrious by the detection of a canon as yet unobserved in the science of Anapæstic metre. "Ned," says Dr. Parr, writing to Dr. Maltby in 1814, "I believe Bentley knew nothing scientifically of choral metre." Why, no, Sam, perhaps he did not; neither did Porson, if we speak strictly of choral metre; and, for Sam himself, little indeed upon any metre whatsoever, except that he somewhere conceives himself to have corrected a few loose iambics of a Latin comic poet (a feat which did not require a Titan). However, at that day (1690) it was no trifle to have revealed a canon which had certainly escaped the most eagle-eyed of the scholars whom I have mentioned. On the present occasion, it was an appropriate sequel of that triumph, and one which will remind scholars of a similar feat by Porson with regard to iambic metre (see Preface to the "Hecuba" of Euripides), that a formidable array of passages, offered by the Boyle party as overthrowing his canon, together with twelve other passages volunteered by himself, are all corrected in a way which, whilst it delivers his canon from the imaginary contradiction, forces him into the finest display of his own critical sagacity.

The fourth argument exposes an anachronism pretty much like that of *Alæsa* in the second. The Pseudo-Phalaris, having occasion to speak of the Zanclæans, and in three previous Letters to speak of the Messanians, manifestly betrays that

at the market-cross, expecting to hire him at eighteenpence a-day, beer *extra*.

he thought Zancle and Messana two different towns. "Certainly," says Bentley, "the true Phalaris could not write thus; and it is a piece of ignorance inexcusable in our sophist not to know that these names belonged to one and the same city at different times." But perhaps the change from the early name of Zancle to the later one of Messana may have happened during the progress of these very Letters. The present arrangement of the Letters is indeed inconsistent with that supposition, for it is the 85th which mentions the old name Zancle, whilst the 1st, 21st, and 84th mention Messana. But that objection, if there were no other, might be eluded by supposing the particular order in which the letters stand in our present editions to have been either purely accidental, or even arbitrarily devised by some one of the early *librarii.* But, allowing all this, the evasion of Bentley's argument will yet be impossible on grounds of chronology. Thucydides tells us the occasion of that irreparable expulsion which the Zanclæans had suffered, and the time—viz. about the last year of the 70th Olympiad.[1] The same author states the circumstances under which the new name Messana arose; and though he does not precisely date this latter incident, he says generally that it was οὐ πολλῳ ὕστερον (*not long after* the other). Separate parts of this statement are corroborated by other historians; and upon the whole, taking the *computus* least favourable to Bentley, the new name of Messana appears not to have been imposed by Anaxilaus until more than sixty years after Phalaris was dead and gone.

One objection there is undoubtedly to this argument, and Bentley frankly avows it: Pausanias antedates Anaxilaus by not less than 180 years. But there is no

[1] "*The* 70*th Olympiad*":—I will here make the reader a present of an exceedingly useful direction for the ready management of Olympiads, whenever he gets into a chronological dispute in a railway carriage going 45 miles an hour. Multiply the particular Olympiad by 4. This cannot be very difficult. Here, for example, multiply 70 into 4, and the product will be 280. Good: and what is he to do with *that?* Put it into his waistcoat-pocket? Why, yes, if he pleases; but first let him subtract it from 777. Now 280, subtracted from 777, leaves 497; and that expresses the Olympic or Grecian period in the Christian equivalent of years B.C. The calamity of Zancle, therefore, occurred nearly 500 years before the birth of Christ.

need to recite the various considerations which invalidate his authority, since the argument derived from him is one of those which prove too much. Doubtless, it would account for the use of "*Messana*" in the Letters of Phalaris, but so effectually account for it as to make it impossible that *any other* name should have been familiarly employed at an age when "*Zancle*" must have been superannuated by a century. Such is the dilemma in which Bentley has noosed his enemies; skilfully leaving it a matter of indifference to his own cause whether they accept or reject the authority of Pausanias.

From this dilemma, however, Boyle attempts to escape, by taking a distinction between the town and the people who drew their name from it. Zanclæans, he thinks, might subsist under that name long after Zancle had changed its masters and forfeited its name. But this hypothesis is destroyed by means of an inscription which Bentley cites from a statue at Olympia, connected with the comment of the person who records it. The statue, it seems, had been set up by Evagoras, who inscribed himself upon it as a Zanclæan; from which single word the recorder infers the antiquity of the statue, arguing that the mere name "*Zanclæan*" sufficiently proved its era to have been anterior to the imposition of the modern name of Messana; whereas clearly, had there been a race of Zanclæans who survived (under that name) the city of Zancle, this argument would have been without force, and could not have occurred to the writer who builds upon it.

The fifth argument will perhaps not be thought so entirely satisfactory as it seemed to Bentley. Phalaris, in threatening the people of Himera, says, αὐτοὺς ἐκτρίψω πίτυος δίκην—("*I will crush them like a pine-tree*"); that is to say, root and branch. Now, this Delphic threat, and in these identical words, appears first of all in Herodotus, who explains the force of it to lie in this—that of all trees the pine only was *radically* destroyed by mere lopping. That historian ascribes the original use of this significant allusion to Crœsus, who did not even *begin* his reign until six years after the pretended use of it by Phalaris. But Bentley conceives that he has sufficient reason to father it upon

Herodotus himself; in which case it will be younger than the age of Phalaris by a century. But I confess myself dissatisfied, or, if that word is too strong, imperfectly satisfied. "We see," says Bentley, "the phrase was then" (*i.e.*, in the time of Crœsus) "so new and unheard of that it puzzled a whole city." But it is probable that accidents of place, rather than of time, would determine the intelligibility of this proverb: wherever the pine-tree was indigenous, and its habits familiarly known, the allusion would suggest itself, and the force of it would be acknowledged, no matter in what age. And, as to the remark that Aulus Gellius, in the title of a chapter now lost, seems to consider Herodotus as the real author of the saying, it amounts to nothing: at this day we should be apt to discuss any vulgar error which has the countenance of Shakspere under a title such as this—"*On the Shaksperian notion that a toad is venomous*"; meaning merely to remind our readers that this notion has a real popular hold and establishment, not surely that Shakspere was the originator of it. The authority of Eustathius, so very modern an author, adds no strength at all to Bentley's hypothesis. No real links of tradition could possibly connect two authors removed from each other by nearly two thousand years. Eustathius ascribes, or seems to ascribe, the *mot* to Herodotus, not in a personal sense, but as a shorthand way of designating the *book* in which it is originally found. The truth is that such a proverb would be co-eval and co-extensive with the tree. Symbolical forms are always delightful to a semi-barbarous age; such, for instance, as the emblematic advice of that silent monitor to a tyrant, who, walking through a garden, and desiring to suggest the policy of removing the aristocracy, as a hostile force, cut off the heads of all the plants which overtopped the rest. Threats more especially assume this form: where they are perfectly understood, they are thus made more lively and significant; and, on the other hand, where they are enigmatical, the uncertainty (according to a critical remark of Demetrius Phalereus) points the attention to them under a peculiar advantage of awe and ominous expectation. This point I might exemplify by citing the symbolic menace of the Scythians to Darius Histaspes—viz. a bow and arrows,

a mouse, and something beside, I forget what; which menace was so mystical that neither the Persian king, nor anybody since his time, has been able to unfold its worshipful meaning. But the Scythians, as savages, and also as fathers of all Tartars, consequently grandfathers of all Chinese, were notoriously blockheads ; consequently might not think a meaning essential to a post-paid letter.

The sixth argument is another case of the second and fourth. Phalaris exults that he had routed the Tauromenites and the Zanclæans. "But," says Bentley, "there is an old true saying—'Πολλὰ καινὰ τοῦ πολέμου'—('*many new and strange things happen in war*'). We have just now seen those same routed Zanclæans rise up again, after a thousand years, to give him a worse defeat. And now the others, too, are taking their time to revenge their old losses: for these, though they are called Tauromenites both here and in three other letters, make protestation against the name, and declare they were called Naxians in the days of the true Phalaris. '*Taurominium, quæ antea Naxos*,' says Pliny. Whence it is that Herodotus and Thucydides, because they wrote before the change of the name, never speak of Taurominium, but of Naxos."

Yet it will be objected that Bentley himself has made Pythagoras contemporary with Phalaris: now of this very Pythagoras Porphyry says "that he delivered Croton, Himera, and *Taurominium* from tyrants"; and Iamblichus says "that, a young man of *Taurominium* being drunk, Pythagoras played him sober by a few airs of grave spondees." A third writer also (Conon) says of a person in the age of Cyrus the Elder, contemporary with Pythagoras and Phalaris, that he "went to *Taurominium* in Sicily." The answer to all this is obvious: *Taurominium* is here used with the same sort of licensed *prolepsis* as when we say, *Julius Cæsar conquered France, and made an expedition into England*, though we know that Gaul and Britain were the names in that age, whilst *France* could not have arisen till after the invasion of the Franks (a German tribe) in the fifth century after Christ, nor England till the naval incursion from Jutland of the Angles in the sixth century.

The seventh, eighth, and eighteenth arguments may be thrown together, all turning upon the same objection—viz. that Phalaris is apt to appropriate the thoughts of better men than himself; a kind of piracy which possibly other royal authors may have practised, but hardly (like Phalaris) upon men born long after their own time. Else probably some scoundrel king has been filching my best thoughts three centuries ago. The three cases of this cited by Bentley are of very different weight. Let us begin with the weakest. Writing to Polygnotus, Phalaris is found sporting this sentiment—λόγος ἔργου σκιὰ παρὰ τοῖς σωφρονεστέροις πεπίστευται—("*that speech is regarded as the shadow of deeds by persons of good sense*"). "It is a very notable saying," says Bentley, "and we are obliged to the author of it; and, if Phalaris had not modestly hinted that others had said it before him, we might have taken it for his own. But then there was either a strange jumping of good wits, or Democritus was a sorry plagiary; for he laid claim to the first invention of it. What shall we say to this matter? Democritus had the character of a man of probity and wit. Besides, here are Plutarch and Diogenes, two witnesses that would scorn to flatter. This bears hard upon the author of the Letters. But how can we help it? He should have minded his hits better, when he was minded to play the tyrant. For Democritus was too young to know even Pythagoras: τὰ τῶν χρόνων μάχεται—('*considerations of chronology are inconsistent with it*'); and yet Pythagoras survived Phalaris." Such is Bentley's argument; but undoubtedly it is unfair. He says "*besides*," as though Plutarch and Diogenes were supplementary evidences to a matter otherwise established upon independent grounds; whereas it is from them only, and from Suidas, whom he *afterwards* brought forward, that we know of any such claim for Democritus. Again, Bentley overrates their authority. That of Plutarch, upon all matters of fact and critical history, is at this day deservedly low; and, as to Diogenes Laertius, nobody can read him without perceiving that precisely upon this department of his labour—viz. the application of all the stray apophthegms, prose epigrams, and "good things," which then floated in conversation—he had no guide at all. Sometimes there might be a slight internal indication of the author:

philosophic sarcasms, for instance, of every age, were ascribed boldly to the cynical Diogenes; sometimes an old tradition might descend with the saying: but much more frequently every aphorism or pointed saying was attributed by turns to each philosopher in succession who, in his own generation, had possession of the public ear. Just the same thing has happened in England; multitudes of felicitous *mots* have come down through the eighteenth century to our days—doing duty first under the names of Swift, Dr. Sheridan, &c., next of Lord Chesterfield, then of Quin, Foote, and above all of George Selwyn, who enjoyed a regal benefit of claim over all waifs and derelicts, and, finally, of Jekyll, Brinsley Sheridan, Courtenay, Sam Rogers, and Thomas Moore. Over and above all this, Bentley is obliged to make two concessions, which take the edge off his argument. Michael Psellus ascribes the saying to Simonides; and Isidore, the Pelusiot, generally to the Lacedæmonians. Now, at all events, this breaks the unanimity of the ascription to Democritus, though each for itself should happen to be false. The objection to Simonides is that he was but seven years old when Phalaris was killed. This, though surely in a matter so perplexed as the chronology of that era it is driving rather closely, we may allow. But what objection is there to the Lacedæmonians? Certainly we can discern, in the very nature of the sentiment, a reason that *may* have influenced Isidore for tracing it up to a *Laconic* parentage; but, though this is an argument for suspicion, it is none for absolute rejection. Neither does Bentley make any objection of that sort. Here again he seems to rely upon chronology; for his own words are no stronger than these—that, "though the date be undetermined, it might *fairly be presumed* to be more recent than he" (*i.e.*, Phalaris). "*Fairly to be presumed!*" is that all? And why is it to be presumed? Simply because "four parts out of five" among the Lacedæmonian apophthegms collected by Plutarch are, in Bentley's judgment, later than the age of Phalaris. Even this leaves a chance, not quite inconsiderable, that the anachronism may not exist in the apophthegm before us. But, finally, had Bentley been called on for his proof of the particular portions here assigned to the Anti-Phalaridean and Post-Phalaridean apophthegms,

it would perhaps have appeared that this present argument of his was utterly worthless. For how came he to discriminate two classes? Of necessity, by some marks (as, suppose, diction of a certain quality, more or less archaic, and metrical arrangement, which would belong to all the γνώμαι taken from the dramatic writers). And are these *criterio* sufficient? Undoubtedly they are: for example, before the iambics of the Greek tragedy existed, iambic apophthegms could not be detached from it. No such metrical γνώμη, therefore, can pretend to an earlier date than that of the drama itself. Well, then, having so effectual a test, with what propriety could Bentley throw the decision upon a ratio of chances—"four out of five"? For, no matter if the chances against a fact had been even a thousand to one before examination, yet, if, *after* examination and submission to the test, the result were in favour of that fact, it will be established no less certainly than if the chances had been just the other way. The positive application of the test is transcendent to all presumptions and probabilities whatsoever, however reasonable it might have been to rely upon them in a case where no examination had been possible. So much for this section, which—though the weakest of the whole—is wound up in the most stinging manner; for, Boyle having argued that apparent plagiarisms in a case like this proved nothing, since, in fact, no absolute originality, and therefore no manifest plagiarism, could be imagined in sentiments which belong to human nature itself, Bentley assures him that he is mistaken—exhibiting in his own person a refutation of that maxim; "for there are many such *nostrums* in his book, such proper and peculiar mistakes as were never thought on nor said by any man before him."

The argument in the eighteenth section, which would fix upon Phalaris a reference to an epitaph first cited by Demosthenes in his Crown oration, delivered in the third year of the 112th Olympiad, nearly two hundred and twenty years after his own death, is about as dubious as the last. But the case in the eighth section is unanswerable. Phalaris is made to say—Θνητοὺς γὰρ ὄντας ἀθάνατον ὀργὴν ἔχειν, ὥς φασί τινές, οὐ προσήκει—(*i.e.*, "*that we, being ourselves mortal, should cherish immortal anger, is, according to the saying, unfitting*").

Now, here the iambic metre, Θνητοὺς γὰρ ὄντας ἀθάνατον ὀργὴν ἔχειν, and the tone of a tragic γνωμὴ, are too evident to leave any doubts about the fountain from which the Pseudo-Phalaris is drawing.

The inference of Bentley is "that, if this iambic came from the stage, it must be later than Phalaris, let it belong to what poet soever, tragic or comic." Boyle, on the other hand, is "very well satisfied that there were both tragic and comic poets before the days of Phalaris." And upon this, in law phrase, issue is joined.

Comedy is discussed in the present section. Bentley argues the following points against Boyle:—First, that Epicharmus is to be considered the father of Comedy upon more and better authorities than Susarion; secondly, this being admitted, that upon chronological grounds Phalaris could not borrow a verse from comedy; thirdly, even supposing Susarion to have contributed something to the invention, yet that this could not have availed Phalaris, unless he had come over *incognito* to the villages of Attica, inasmuch as "his plays were extemporal, and never published in writing"; and, fourthly, granting even "that they *were* published, it is more likely they were in tetrametres and other chorical measures, than in iambics." And why so? Because, as the Drama grew up from a festival, in which the main elements were singing and dancing, it is certain that the earliest metres were those which adapted themselves to dancing. It is, however, true, though at that time unknown to the learned, that an unpublished MS. of one Diomedes Scholasticus, upon Dionysius Thrax, which MS. is in the King's Library, asserts, that "Susarion was the beginner of comedy in verse, whose plays were all lost in oblivion: but there are two or three iambics of a play of his still remembered." In fact, there are in all five: the four first in this very MS., which had been seen only by Bentley (and some of them in two other authors); the last (which, by the way, seems to me a later addition) in Stobæus. I will give the whole, as the sentiment unfortunately belongs to all ages:—

"'Ακούετε, λεώς· Σουσαρίων λέγει τάδε,
Υἱὸς Φιλίνου, Μεγαρόθεν, Τριποδίσκιος·
Κακὸν γυναῖκες· ἀλλ' ὅμως, ὦ δημόται,

> Οὐκ ἐστὶν οἰκεῖν οἰκίαν ἄνευ κακοῦ.
> Καὶ γὰρ τὸ γῆμαι, καὶ τὸ μὴ γῆμαι, κακόν."

"Hear, O people! thus speaks Susarion, &c. Women are a torment, but still, my countrymen, there is no keeping house without this torment. To marry, then, and not to marry, is alike calamitous."

Bentley produces this evidence (which, by the way, he corrects beautifully) against himself, but disarms it chiefly by this argument:—Susarion is here introduced addressing the audience in his own person; now *that*, taken in connexion with the iambic metre, will prove the verses to be no part of a play; for, though sometimes the poet *did* address the parterre, yet this was always done through the chorus; and what were the measures that the chorus used at that time? "Never iambics, but always anapæsts or tetrametres; and I believe," says Bentley, "there is not one instance that the chorus speaks at all to the *pit* in iambics; to the actor it sometimes does." Boyle, in treating the case of Susarion, had made much use of a passage in the Arundel Marbles. Unfortunately, the words which he particularly relied on were mere emendations of Palmerius and Selden, not originally (as he fancied) readings exhibited by the marbles themselves. Now it happened that Selden, whose Greek knowledge I myself consider miserably inaccurate, had in this instance made but a very imperfect examination of the marble chronicle itself. The consequence was that Boyle had here unintentionally prepared an opening for a masterly display of skill on the part of Bentley: who had the pleasure at one and the same moment of exhibiting his Greek without ostentation, of doing a critical service to that famous Arundelian monument on which so many learned heads had been employed, of dragging after him as captives a whole host of heroes in literature whom he had indisputably defeated, and, finally, of establishing his triumph in the question immediately before him.[1] All this learning, however, Bentley

[1] Seldom, perhaps, has there been a more ingenious correction than that of ἐν Ἀθήναις on the Arundel Marble. Bentley had remarked elsewhere that the marble uniformly said Ἀθήνησι: why, then, should it suddenly, and in this place only, say ἐν Ἀθήναις (which was Selden's suggestion for filling up the ΕΝΑ . . . ΑΙΣ)? Bentley's reading of ἐν ἀπήναις, *in plaustris*, immediately recalls the line of Horace—

"Dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis."

fails not to remind his readers, is *ex abundanti*, so much over and above what was necessary to decide the dispute, and, in fact, an *excursus* forced upon him by his antagonist. For in reality certain words in the apophthegm, nowise essential to its expression, are proofs (or so Bentley regards them) that the Pseudo-Phalaris was borrowing not merely from the Greek drama before it existed, but from a specific dramatist —Euripides, to wit; and from a specific tragedy now lost— viz., Philoctetes. However, I must own that this part of the argument appears to myself questionable at least, and perhaps positively wrong; questionable, because Bentley has laid far too much stress on two words so exceedingly common as ἔχειν and προσήκει, the rest being (as he himself admits) absolutely indispensable to the expression of the thought, and therefore sure to occur to any writer whatever having occasion to express it. To these two words confessedly he commits the entire burden of the tragedian's claim; and upon the ground that, where so many equivalent expressions were at hand, it was hardly to be supposed that two persons writing independently "would have hit upon the same by chance." But I reply, that the words ἔχειν and προσήκει, each containing an iambus, are convenient, and likely to offer themselves to any man writing in iambic metre, which several of Bentley's equivalents are not. At any rate, the *extent* of the coincidence is not sufficient. But, secondly, I think that unquestionably the apophthegm was *not* from the fragment of Philoctetes; for the words there stand thus:—

> "Ὥσπερ δὲ θνητὸν καὶ τὸ σῶμ' ἡμῶν ἔφυ,
> Οὕτω προσήκει μηδὲ τὴν ὀργὴν ἔχειν
> Ἀθάνατον."

No less important is Bentley's confirmation of a reading formerly proposed by one who distrusted it. Palmerius, much against his will (for he could find no sense in the words), had made out upon the marble that the inventor of Comedy received as his prize—ἰσχάδων ἄρσιχον πίθον οἴνου—("a basket of figs and a hogshead of wine"). Bentley produced an unpublished couplet of Dioscorides, the last line of which fully confirms the marble—

> "Χ' ὠ 'ττικὸς ἦν σύκων ἄρριχος ἆθλος ἔτι

(*i.e.*, "and a basket of figs besides was the Attic prize"). Another reading of this line, which substitutes ὕθλος for ἆθλος, I need not notice more particularly, as it is immaterial to the point before us.

In this there is some difference, even as to the form of the thought; and the Pseudo-Phalaris must greatly have disturbed the order, *and without apparent reason*, to obtain his own. But the best answer is this,—that the words, as they now stand, are in a natural iambic arrangement:—

"Θνητοὺς μὲν ὄντας ἀθάνατον ὀργὴν ἔχειν
Οὐ ——— προσήκει."

The defect in the second line might be supplied in a thousand ways. And I therefore throw Bentley back upon that general form of his argument which he imagined to be superseded by a special one: King Phalaris, in any case, is detected borrowing from a tragic drama, if not from this particular drama of Euripides; and, as elsewhere we have seen him drawing loans from cities before they were founded, so here he is manifestly borrowing a sentiment from some tragedian unknown, before tragedy itself existed.

The two next arguments may be thrown together. In the first of them, Phalaris is convicted of borrowing a phrase (τὸν ὄλεθρον εὗρε) from Callimachus; and another (ἑτέρῳ δαίμονι, in the sense of *bad fortune*) perhaps also from Callimachus—if not, from Pindar; no matter which, since either way there would be an anachronism. These cases are, perhaps, doubtful; in fact, the acknowledged coincidence of two original poets shows that the last phrase, at any rate, had gained a sort of proverbial footing. Not so with regard to the word *philosopher*, which furnishes the matter for another section. The 56th letter is addressed *to Pythagoras the Philosopher*: this, being only the superscription, may have been the addition of a copier; and, if so, the argument of Bentley would be eluded; but in the 23d letter the word *philosophy* cannot be detached from the context. Now, it is universally agreed that Pythagoras himself introduced [1] the word; a fact which

[1] In saying that Pythagoras introduced the term *philosopher*, I must be understood to mean (and Bentley, we presume, meant) that he first gave currency to that particular determination of the word "philosopher" by which, under the modest εὐφημισμός of an amateur or dilettante in wisdom, was understood an investigator of first causes upon a particular scheme; else, in the general and unlimited sense of the word, merely as a lover of wisdom, and nothing masked under that title, there can be no doubt that Pythagoras did *not* introduce the

hardly needs an attestation. However, from a crowd of authors, Bentley quotes Cicero to the following effect:—"That, when Pythagoras had discoursed before Leon (the tyrant of Sicyon), that prince, much taken with his wit and eloquence, asked him what art or trade he professed. '*Art*,' says Pythagoras, '*I profess none; I am a philosopher*.' Leon, in admiration of the newness of the name, inquired what these *philosophers* were, and wherein they differed from other men." On this, says Bentley, "What a difference is here between the two tyrants! The one knows not what *philosopher* means: the other seems to account it as threadbare a word as the name of wise men of Greece; and that, too, before he had ever spoken with Pythagoras. We cannot tell which conversation was first. If Phalaris was the first, the Epistles must be a cheat. But, allowing Leon's to be the first, yet it could not be long after the other; and it is very hard to believe that the fame of so small a matter could so soon reach Phalaris's ear in his castle, through his guard of blue-coats, and the loud bellowing of his bull." In a note on the word blue-coats,[1] Bentley says, "This is not said at random; for I find the Agrigentines forbade their citizens to wear blue clothes, because blue was Phalaris's livery."

Boyle's answer is characteristic at once of his breeding as a man of quality, and of his pursuits as a scholar: for he takes a scholarlike illustration, and he uses it with the

word. The case is the same as that of the modern *illuminati*. As a general and unrestricted term, it is, of course, applicable to all men, each in his degree, who can make any pretensions to intellectual culture. But, in the particular sense of Adam Weishaupt, and many other mystical enthusiasts of modern Germany, that term designated a secret society, whose supposed objects and purposes have been stated by Robinson and the Abbé Baruel with a degree of circumstantiality which must have been rather surprising to the gentlemen themselves.

[1] The meaning of Bentley's joke, as well as odd coincidence in the Agrigentine regulation, are now obsolete. It must be remembered, therefore, that all the menial retainers of English noblemen, from a very early period of our history—and from this passage it seems that the practice still subsisted in Bentley's time—received at stated intervals an ample blue coat. This was the *generic* distinction of their order; the *special* one was the badge or cognisance appropriated to the particular family under which they took service; and from the periodical *deliveries* of these characteristic articles of servile costume came our word *livery*.

shallow learning of a courtier. Queen Elizabeth, it seems, in addressing one of the universities, had introduced, upon her own authority, the word *Fœminilis.* Now, could that learned body have paid her a more delicate compliment, asks Boyle, than by using the royal word in its answer? Bentley rejects this as a piece of unworthy adulation. Not that Bentley was always above flattering; but his mind was too coarse and plain to enter into the spirit of such romantic and Castilian homage: his good sense was strong, his imaginative gallantry weak. However, I agree with him that, previously to any personal conversation with Pythagoras, the true Phalaris could not possibly have used this new designation "as familiarly as if it had been the language of his nurse," but "would have ushered it in with some kind of introduction."

In the following section comes on to be argued the great question of the age of Tragedy. The occasion is this:—In the 63d epistle, Phalaris "is in great wrath with one Aristolochus, a tragic poet, that nobody ever heard of, for writing tragedies against him." Bentley amuses himself a little with the expression of "writing tragedies *against* a man"; and with the name of Aristolochus, whom he pronounces a *fairy* poet, for having kept himself invisible to all the world since his own day; though Boyle facetiously retorts that, judging by the length of his name, he must have been a giant rather than a fairy. But the strength of Bentley's objection is announced in this sentence:—"*I* must take the boldness to tell Phalaris, who am out of his reach, that he lays a false crime to the poet's charge; for there was no such thing nor word as tragedy when he tyrannised at Agrigentum." Upon this arose the dispute concerning the earliest date of tragedy.

In treating this interesting question, Bentley first addresses himself to the proof that Thespis, and not Epigenes or Phrynicus, was the true and original inventor of tragedy, and that no relics of any one Thespian drama survived in the age of Aristotle; consequently, that those fragments which imposed upon Clemens Alexandrinus and others were forgeries; and he points out even the particular person most liable to the suspicion of the forgery—viz. Heraclides Ponticus, a scholar of Aristotle's. The fact

of the forgery is settled indeed upon other evidence; for these four monstrous words, Κναξζβι, Χθυπτης, Φλεγμω, Δροψ, occur in the iambics attributed to Thespis. Now, these words are confessedly framed as artificial contrivances for including the entire twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet. But Bentley makes it tolerably evident that no more than eighteen, certainly not twenty-four, existed in the age of Thespis. The lines, then, are spurious; and the imaginary evidences for the fact of Thespis having written anything are got rid of. And, as to any supplementary argument from the Alcestis, supposed to be ascribed to him by the Arundel Marbles, that is overthrown—1, by the received tradition that Thespis admitted no female characters into his plays: *à fortiori*, then, that he could not have treated a subject the whole passion of which turned upon a female character; but, 2, more effectually by the triumphant proof which Bentley gives that the Arundelian "Alcestis" was a pure fiction of Selden's, arising out of imperfect examination. Next, however, let it be conceded that Thespis *did* write, will that be of any service to Boyle? This introduces the question of the precise era of Thespis. Now, on the Oxford Marble, most unfortunately the letters which assign this are obliterated by time and weather. But Bentley suggests an obvious remedy for the misfortune, which gives a *certain* approximation. The name of Thespis stands between two great events—viz. the defeat of Crœsus by Cyrus, immediately preceding, and the accession of Darius, immediately following. The first of these is placed by all great chronologists in the first year of the 59th Olympiad; the last, in the second year of the 65th Olympiad. *Between* these dates, then, it was (a latitude of twenty-five years) that Thespis founded the tragic drama. And, this being so, it follows, obviously, that Phalaris, who perished in the third year of the 57th Olympiad, could not have afforded a subject to tragedy during his lifetime. Boyle most idly imagines an error in the marble chronicle, through an omission of the sculptor. Certainly the σφάλματα *operarum* (the slips and oversights of compositors) are well known to literary men of our times, but hardly where the proof-sheets happen to be marble; and, after all, Bentley shows him that he

would take no benefit by this omission. Three collateral disquisitions — on Phrynicus, the successor of Thespis; secondly, on Solon; and, thirdly, on the origin of the word *tragedy*—are treated elaborately, and with entire success; but they depend too much on a vast variety of details to admit of compression.

In the twelfth section Bentley examines the dialect. "Had all other ways failed us," says he, "of detecting this impostor, yet his very speech had betrayed him: for his language is Attic; but he had forgotten that the scene of these epistles was not Athens, but Sicily, where the Doric tongue was generally spoken and written. Pray, how came that idiom to be the court language at Agrigentum?" Athens, the μισοτύραννος, or tyrant-hating, by old prerogative, was not likely to be a favourite with the greatest of tyrants. And, above all, we must consider this—that in the age of Phalaris, before literature had given to the Attic dialect that supremacy which afterwards it enjoyed, there was no one reason for valuing this exotic dialect (as it was to Phalaris), or giving it any sort of preference to the native dialect of Sicily.

But it is objected that Phalaris was born at Astypalæa, an island where, in early times, there existed an Attic colony. Now, in answer to this—waiving the question of fact—would he, who for twenty years had been a tax-gatherer in Sicily, have not learned the Doric? Studying popularity, would he have reminded the natives, by every word he uttered, that he was a foreigner? But perhaps he was *not* born at Astypalæa: there is a strong presumption that he was born in Sicily: and, even if at Astypalæa, there is "direct evidence that it was a Dorian colony, not an Athenian; for it was planted by the Megarians.

But other eminent Sicilians, it may be said, quitted the Doric for the Attic in their writings. True: but *that* was in solemn compositions addressed to the world—epic poems and histories; not in familiar letters, "mostly directed to the next towns, or to some of his own domestics, about private affairs, or even the expenses of his family, and never designed for the public view."

"Yet," retorts Boyle, "we have a letter of Dion of Syracuse to Dionysius the Tyrant, and a piece of Dionysius's,

both preserved among Plato's Epistles, and written in such a dialect as if both prince and philosopher" (to use the doctor's phrase) "had gone to school at Athens."

Here, rejoins Bentley, he is "very smart upon me; but he lashes himself; for the philosopher really *did* go to school at Athens, and lived with Plato and Speusippus." And, as to the prince, though he "did not go to Athens, yet Athens, as I may say, went to him; for not Plato only, but several other philosophers, were entertained by him at his court in Syracuse."

But again, says Boyle, thinking to produce a memorable and unobjectionable case, because taken from Scripture, Epimenides the Cretan did not write in the Cretic dialect; for, in the line cited from him by St. Paul,

"Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί,'

the word ἀεί would, in the Cretic dialect, have been αἰές. Even from this position, so difficult as it might seem at this time of day to dispute, Bentley's unrelenting scourge immediately forces him: he produces a Cretic epistle and a Cretic inscription (of absolute authority, being on marble), both of which present the form ἀεί. But, even had it been otherwise, we must remember that from a poem to a familiar epistle *non valet consequentia* (*no reference stands good*); the latter could not abandon the dialect native to the writer without impeaching its credit. And so *fatal* is Bentley's good luck here as everywhere that he produces a case where a letter of this very Epimenides, which still survives, was denounced as spurious by an ancient critic (Demetrius the Magnesian) for no other reason than because it was not Cretic in its dialect, but Attic.

With his customary bad fortune, Boyle next produces Alcæus and Sappho, as persons "who were born in places where the Ionic was spoken, and yet wrote their lyric poems in Æolic or Doric." For this assertion he really had some colourable authority, since both Ælian and Suidas expressly rank Lesbos among the Ionian cities. Yet, because Meursius, and before him Brodæus, and after both Bentley himself, had all independently noticed the word Lesbos as an error for Lebedos, Bentley replies in the following gentle terms:—

"I protest I am ashamed even to refute such miserable trash, though Mr. Boyle was not ashamed to write it. What part is it that I must teach him? That Alcæus and Sappho were natives of Lesbos? But it is incredible that he should be ignorant of that. Or, that the language of Lesbos was Æolic? Yes, *there* his learning was at a loss; he believed it was Ionic." It is then demonstrated, by a heap of authorities, not only that Lesbos was an Æolian city, but that (as Strabo says), in a manner, it was the metropolis of Æolian cities.

Well, but Agathyrsides, at least, quitted his Samian or Doric dialect for Ionic. Answer: There was no such person; nor did the island of Samos speak Doric, but Ionic Greek.

Andronicus of Rhodes, then, in his still surviving Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics. The Commentary does indeed survive; but that the author was a Rhodian is the mere conceit of a modern, and a very unlearned, person.[1] This fact had been already stated by Daniel Heinsius, the original editor of Andronicus.

Well, at any rate, Dionysius of Halicarnassus: that case is past disputing. Why, yes; he was of Doric birth undoubtedly, and undoubtedly he wrote in the Attic dialect. But then, in the first place, he *lived* amongst those who had nothing to do with the Doric—which was one reason for abjuring his native dialect; and, secondly, which is the material difference between him and Phalaris, he wrote in the age of Augustus Cæsar, when the Attic dialect had been established for four centuries as the privileged language of Grecian literature.

"*But the most remarkable instance of all,*" says Boyle, "*is that of Zaleucus, King of the Locrians, a Doric colony: the preface to whose laws is preserved, and has plainly nothing of the Doric dialect in it.*" Sad fate of this strongest of all instances! His inexorable antagonist sets to work, and, by arguments drawn from place, time, and language, makes it pretty nearly a dead certainty that the pretended laws of Zaleucus were as pure a fabrication as the Letters of Phalaris. Afterwards he makes the same scrutiny, and with the same result, of the laws attributed to Charondas; and,

[1] It is, however, still reprinted at intervals by the Clarendon Press as the work of Andronicus Rhodius.

in the end, he throws out a conjecture that both these forgeries were the work of some sophist not even a native Greek; a conjecture which, by the way, has since been extended by Valckenaer to the Pseudo-Phalaris himself, upon the authority of some Latin idioms.[1]

[*N.B.*—Any future editor of Bentley's critical works ought to notice the arguments of Warburton, who, in the "Divine Legation," endeavours to support the two law-givers against Bentley.]

The use of the Attic dialect, therefore, in an age when as yet no conceivable motive had arisen for preferring that to any other dialect, the earliest morning not having dawned of those splendours which afterwards made Athens the glory of the earth, is of itself a perfect detection of the imposture. But let this be waived. Conceive that mere caprice in a wilful tyrant like Phalaris led him to adopt the Attic dialect: *stet pro ratione voluntas.* Still, even in such a case, he must have used the Attic of his own day. Caprice might go abroad, or it might go back, in point of time; but caprice could not prophetically anticipate, as Phalaris does, the diction of an age long posterior to his own. Upon this subject Bentley expresses himself in a more philosophic tone than he usually adopts. "Every living language," says he, "like the perspiring bodies of living creatures, is in perpetual motion and alteration. Some words go off, and become obsolete; others are taken in, and by degrees grow into common use; or the same word is inverted to a new sense and notion; which, in tract of time, makes as observable a change in the air and features of a language as age makes in the lines and mien of a face." Boyle, however, admitting this as a general law,

[1] Valckenaer's argument is good for as far as it goes: pity that so exquisite a Grecian should not have detected many more flaws of the same quality. But in this respect the Letters of Phalaris seem to enjoy that sort of unaccountable security which hitherto has shielded the forgeries of Chatterton. No man with the slightest ear for metre, or the poorest tact for the characteristic marks of modern and ancient style of poetic feeling, but must at once acknowledge the extravagance of referring these to the age of Henry IV. Yet, with the exception of an allusion to the technical usages of horse-racing, and one other, I do not remember that any specific anachronisms, either as to words or things, have been yet pointed out in Chatterton.

chooses to suppose that the Greek language presented an eminent exception to it; insomuch that writings separated by an interval of two thousand years were, in his judgment, nearer to each other in point of phraseology than English works separated by only two centuries. And as the reason of this fancied stability he assigns the extended empire of the Greeks. Bentley disputes both the fact and the reason. As to the fact, he says that the resemblance between the old and modern Greek literature was purely mimetic. Why else, he asks, arose the vast multitude of scholiasts? Their aid was necessary to explain phrases which had become obsolete. As to extensive empire, no better cause can be assigned why languages are *not* stationary. In the Roman language, for example, more changes took place during the single century between the Duilian column (*i.e.*, the first naval victory of the Romans) and the comedies of Terence than during the four centuries preceding. And why? Because in that century the Roman eagles first flew beyond the limits of Italy. Again, with respect to the Athenian dialect, we find, from Dionysius of Halicarnassus, that already, by the time of the great orators, the peculiar Attic of Plato and Thucydides had become antiquated, although these last stood in the same relation of time to Demosthenes that Dryden did to Pope; that is, the elders were drawing near to death when the juniors were on the verge of puberty. Now, this is sufficiently explained by the composition of the Athenian population in the 110th Olympiad, as afterwards recorded by Athenæus. At that time there were twenty-one thousand citizens, ten thousand naturalised foreigners, and four hundred thousand slaves. Under this proportion of nineteen foreigners[1] to one native well might the dialect suffer rapid alterations.

Thus far Bentley maintained his usual superiority. But in the particular examples which he adduced he was both unexpectedly penurious and not always accurate. The word θυγατέρες (*daughters*), used in the Hebrew manner for

[1] Bentley here, rather too hastily, takes credit for as many foreigners as slaves, forgetting the *vernacular* slaves—*i.e.* slaves not imported from abroad, but born and reared within the household, in Rome called *vernæ*.

young women, was indisputably a neologism impossible to the true Phalaris. So also of *προτρέπειν*, used for *προφέρειν*. With respect to the phrase *παίδων ἐρασταὶ*, used for *lovers of children*, which Bentley contends must have been equivalent in the elder ages to the infamous word *παιδερασταὶ*, it has been since supposed that he was refuted by Markland, and a passage (viz. v. 1088) in the "Supplices" of Euripides; but, on the whole, I am of opinion that Bentley was right. It was the prerogative of the tragic drama, as of poetry in general, to exalt and ennoble: thus, for instance, "filled her with thee a goddess fair," in Milton's "L'Allegro," would in plain prose become almost an obscene expression; but, exalted and sustained by the surrounding images, it is no more than allowably voluptuous. In the absolute prose of Phalaris I think with Bentley that the phrase could not have borne an innocent meaning. Thus far Bentley was right, or not demonstrably wrong; but in the two next instances he errs undeniably; and the triumph of Boyle, for the first time and the last, cannot be gainsaid. Bentley imagined that *προδίδωμι*, in the unusual sense of *giving beforehand* (instead of *betraying*), had no countenance from the elder writers; and he denounced the word *διώκω*, when applied to the *pursuing an object of desire*, believing that it was applicable only to the case of *an enemy pursuing one who flies.* Here we see the danger, in critical niceties, of trusting to any single memory, though the best in the world. And I can well believe Bentley when he charges his oversight upon the hurry of the "press staying for *more copy*." Having erred, however, the best course is to confess frankly and unreservedly; and this Bentley does. But in one point he draws from his very error an advantageous inference: his Oxford enemies had affected to regard him as a mere index-hunter; and Alsop had insolently described him as "*virum in volvendis Lexicis satis diligentem*"—("*a man tolerably industrious in turning over dictionaries*"). Now, says Bentley, it was exactly because I was *not* what they would represent me, exactly because I too much neglected to search Lexicons and Indexes, and too entirely relied on my own reading and unassisted memory, that this one sole error in my first hasty Dissertation remained. However, it *did* remain, says the

enemy of Bentley. Yes, viper, you are right: it *did* remain; and it *does;* but it remains, like the heel of Achilles, to show a touch of human infirmity, in what else might have claimed the immaculateness of a divine origin.

Upon a final examination of the Letters, Bentley detected three other words which manifestly belonged to a later and a philosophic era—viz., πρόνοια, used not in the sense of *foresight,* but of *Divine Providence;* στοιχεῖον, which at first meant a *letter* or an element of words, used for *element* in the natural philosopher's sense; and κόσμος, used for *the world.* But the truth is that this line of argument threw Bentley upon the hard task of proving negatives. It might be easy, as occasions offered, to show that such a word *was* used by a particular age; one positive example sufficed for *that:* but difficult indeed to show that a word was *not.* It might be easy to prove, as to a particular man, that he *was* drunk on some day in 1857; but impossible to devise a mode of evidence which should establish satisfactorily that he was *not* drunk; since no witness could vouch for more than his own time of observation. The whole is a matter of practice and feeling; and, without any specific instances of modern idiom, which yet might perhaps still be collected by a very vigilant critic, no man of good taste, completely prepared, will hesitate to condemn the letters as an imposture upon the general warrant of the style and quality of the thoughts: these are everywhere flavoured by a state of society highly artificial and polished; and they argue an era of literature matured, or even waning, as regards several of its departments, and generally as regards the pretensions of its professors.

The argument which succeeds in the fourteenth and nineteenth sections is equally ludicrous and convincing. Throughout the letters, Phalaris sports a most royal munificence, and gives away *talents* with as much fluency as if they had been sixpences. Now, the jest of the matter is that Sicilian talents were really not much more. The Attic forger of the letters, naturally thinking of the Attic talent (worth about £180), forgot, or had never learned, that the Sicilian talent was literally *two thousand times* less in value. Thus Phalaris complains of a hostile invasion as having robbed him of *seven talents;* which, if they could be supposed Attic

talents, make £1260 sterling; but, being Sicilian talents, no more than 12s. 7d. Again, he gives to a lady, as her marriage portion, five talents, meaning, of course, Attic talents (*i.e.*, £900); but what the true Phalaris must have understood by that sum was—nine shillings! And in other places he mentions Δραχμαὶ, coins which were not Sicilian. Boyle endeavoured to resist these exposures, but without success; and the long dissertation on Sicilian money which his obstinacy drew from Bentley remains a monument of the most useful learning, since it corrects the errors of Gronovius, and other first-rate authorities, upon this very complex topic.

Meantime, the talent everywhere meant to be understood was the Athenian; and upon that footing, the presents made by Phalaris are even more absurd by their excess than upon the Sicilian valuation of the talent by their defect. Either way, the Pseudo-Phalaris is found offending against the possibilities of the time and of the place. One instance places the absurdity in a striking light, both as respects the giver and the receiver. Gold was at that time very scarce in Greece, so that the Spartans could not in every part of that country collect enough to gild the face of a single statue; and they finally bought it in Asia of Crœsus. Nay, long afterwards, Philip of Macedon, being possessed of one golden cup, weighing no more than half-a-pound Troy, could not sleep if it were not placed under his pillow. But, perhaps, Sicily had what Greece wanted? That could be little likely, considering the easy and rapid intercourse of the Grecian ports with the richer districts of Sicily: but, so far from it, the known historic fact is that even seventy years later than the true Phalaris a powerful Sicilian prince—viz. Hiero, King of Syracuse—could not obtain gold enough for a single tripod and a Victoria until after a long search and a mission to Corinth; and even then his success was an accident. So much for the powers of the giver. Now for the receiver. A physician in those days was not paid very liberally; and, even in a later age, the following are the rates which the philosopher Crates assigns as a representative scale abstracted from the real practice and operative tariff which governed the donations of rich men:—"To a cook, £30; to a physician, 8d.; to a

toad-eater or sycophant, £900 ; to a moral adviser, *smoke*[1]; to a courtesan, £180 ; to a philosopher, 4d." But this was satire. True: yet, seriously, not long after the death of Phalaris, we have an account of the fees paid to Democedes, the most eminent physician of that day. His salary for a whole year from the people of Ægina was £180. The following year he was hired by the Athenians for £300 ; and the year after that by a prince, richer than Phalaris, for £360 ; so that he never got so much as a guinea a-day. Yet, in the face of these facts, Phalaris gives to *his* physician, Polycletus, the following presents for a single cure :—four goblets of refined gold, two silver bowls of unrivalled workmanship, ten couple of large Thericlæan cups, twenty young boys for his slaves, fifteen hundred pounds in ready money, besides a pension for life, equal to the highest salaries of his generals or admirals ; all which, says Bentley, though shocking to common sense, when supposed to come from Phalaris, a petty prince of a petty district in Sicily, "is credible enough, if we consider that a sophist was the paymaster" ; who, as the actors in the Greek comedy paid all debts with lupins, pays *his* with words.

As his final argument, Bentley objects that the very invention of letter-writing was due to Atossa, the Persian Empress, wife of Darius Hystaspes, younger than Phalaris by one or two generations. This is asserted upon the authority of Tatian, and of a much more learned writer, Clement of Alexandria. But, be that as it may, every person who considers the general characteristics of those times must be satisfied that, if the epistolary form of composition existed at all, it was merely as a rare agent in sudden and difficult emergencies—rarer, perhaps, by a great deal than the use of telegraphic[2] despatches at present. As a species of literary composition, it could not possibly arise until its use in matters of business had familiarised it to all the world. Letters of grace and sentiment would be a remote after-thought upon

[1] "*Smoke*" :—*Fumum vendere*, to sell smoke, was an established technical expression for the promises and the performances of Greek and Roman swindlers.

[2] This, being written in 1830, of course refers only to the old wooden telegraph.

letters of necessity and practical negotiation. Bentley is too brief, however, on this head, and does not even glance at some collateral topics, such as the Lacedæmonian Caduceus and its history, which would have furnished a very interesting *excursus.* His reason for placing this section last is evident. The story of Mucianus, a Roman of consular rank, who had been duped by a pretended letter of Sarpedon's (that same Sarpedon, *si Diis placeat,* who is killed in the "Iliad" by Patroclus), furnishes him with a parting admonition, *personally* appropriate to his antagonist—that something more even than the title of *Honourable*[1] "cannot always secure a man from cheats and impostures."

In the sixteenth section, which might as properly have stood last, Bentley moves the startling question (able of itself to decide the controversy), "in what secret cave" the letters had been hidden, "so that nobody ever heard of them for a thousand years"? He suggests that some trusty servant of the tyrant must have buried them underground; "and it was well he did so; for, if the Agrigentines had met with them (who burned both him and his relations and his friends), they had certainly gone to pot." [The foreign translator of the two Phalaris Dissertations (whose work, by the way, was revised by the illustrious Valckenaer) is puzzled by this phrase of "*going to pot,*" and he translates it conjecturally in the following ludicrous terms: "Si enim eas invenissent Agritentini, sine dubio *tergendis natibus inserviissent.*"] Boyle, either himself in a mist, or designing to mystify his readers, cites the cases, as if parallel cases, of Paterculus and Phædrus, the first of whom is not quoted by any author now extant till Priscian's time—five hundred years later than his own era—and not again until nine hundred years after Priscian: as to Phædrus, supposed to belong to the Augustan era, he is first mentioned by Avienus, four hundred years after this epoch, and never once again until his works were brought to light by Pithou late in the sixteenth century. These cases Boyle cites as countenancing that of Phalaris. But Bentley will not suffer the argument to be so darkened: the thousand years which succeeded to Priscian and Avienus were years

[1] Boyle, the mover of the Phalaris dispute, was the *Honourable* Charles Boyle, as being a son of Lord Orrery.

of barbarity; there was little literature, and little interest in literature, through that long night in Western Europe. This sufficiently accounts for the obscurity in which the two Latin authors slumbered. But the thousand years which succeeded to Phalaris, Solon, and Pythagoras, were precisely the most enlightened period of that extent, and, in fact, the only period of one thousand successive years, in the records of our planet, that has uninterruptedly enjoyed the light of literature. So that the difference between the case of Phalaris and those which are alleged as parallel by Boyle is exactly this: that the Pseudo-Phalaris was first heard of in "the very dusk and twilight before the long night of ignorance"; whereas Phædrus, Lactantius, &c., suffered the more natural effect of being eclipsed by that night. The darkness which extinguished the genuine classics first drew Phalaris into notice. Besides that, in the cases brought forward to countenance that of Phalaris the utmost that can be inferred is no more than a negative argument,—those writers are simply not quoted; but from *that* no argument can be drawn concluding for their non-existence: whereas, in the case of Phalaris, we find various authors—Pindar, for instance, Plato, Aristotle, Timæus, Polybius, and others, down even to Lucian—talking of Phalaris the *man* (though never of Phalaris the writer) in terms which are quite inconsistent with the statements of these letters. And we may add, with regard to other distinguished authors, as Cicero in particular, that on many occasions their very silence, under circumstances which suggested the strongest temptation to quote from these letters, had they been aware of their existence, is of itself a sufficient proof that no such records of the Sicilian tyrant had ever reached them by report.

Finally, the *matter* of the letters, to which Bentley dedicates a separate section of his work, is decisive of the whole question to any man of judgment who has reviewed them without prejudice or passion. Strange it is at this day to recollect the opposite verdicts on this point of the controversy, as contrasted with the qualifications of those from whom they proceeded. Sir William Temple, an aged statesman, and practised in public business, intimate with courts, a man of great political sagacity, a high-bred gentleman, and

of brilliant accomplishments, singles out these letters not merely as excellent in their kind, but as one argument amongst others for the unapproachable supremacy in all intellectual pretensions of the ancients; on the other hand, Bentley, a young scholastic clergyman of recluse habits, comparatively low in rank, and of humble breeding, pronounces the letters to be utterly despicable, and unworthy of a prince. On such a question, and between such judges, who would hesitate to abide by the award of the sage old diplomatist? Yet a single explanation discredits his judgment: he was angry and prejudiced. And the actual result is that every reader of sense heartily accedes to Bentley's sentence—"You feel, by the emptiness and deadness of them, that you converse with some dreaming pedant with his elbow on his desk; not with an active, ambitious tyrant, with his hand on his sword, commanding a million of subjects."

It remains that I should say a few words on Bentley's character, and the general amount of his claims. This part of his task, Dr. Monk, for a reason quite unintelligible to myself, has declined; and Dr. Parr has attempted it with his usual sonorous tympany of words, but with no vestiges of distinct meaning, or of appropriate commendation. I do not design, on this occasion, to supply these omissions by a solemn and minute adjudication of Bentley's *quantum meruit* in every part of his pretensions: that will be a proper undertaking, and one from which I shall not shrink, in connexion with some general review of the leading scholars since the restoration of letters, English and Continental. At present I shall confine myself to a brief and unpretending suggestion of some few principal considerations which should guide our estimate of Bentley's services to literature.

Bentley was a man of strong "mother wit," and of masculine good sense. These were his primary advantages; and he had them in excess, if excess belongs to gifts of that quality, which are really the artillery of nature provided *against* excess. They are gifts which have not always illuminated the labours of the great classical scholar; who, though necessarily a man of talent, has found it possible in some

eminent instances to dispense with a powerful understanding. In this there is no contradiction ; it is possible to combine great talents with a poor understanding; and such a combination is, perhaps, not uncommon. The Scaligers, perhaps, were men of vigorous sense. Isaac Casaubon, who has been much praised for his sense (and of late more than ever by Messrs. Southey and Savage Landor), seems little above mediocrity in that particular. His notices of men and human life are, for the most part, poor and lifeless commonplaces. Salmasius, a greater scholar, was even meaner as a thinker. To take an illustration or two from our own times, Valckenaer and Porson—the two best Grecians, certainly, since Bentley—were both undistinguished in general power of mind. Porson's *jeux d'esprit* in the newspapers of his day were all childish and dull beyond description ; and, accordingly, his Whig friends have been reduced to the sad necessity of lying and stealing on his behalf, by claiming (and even publishing) as Porson's a copy of verses ("The Devil's Sunday Thoughts") of which they must very well know that he did not write, nor had the power to write, one solitary line. The verses were too notoriously Southey's ; except, indeed, as to one brief fraction : and *that* was Coleridge's. Parr, again, a good Latin scholar, though no Grecian, for general power of thought and sense, was confessedly the merest driveller of his age. But Bentley was more than merely respectable in this particular : he reached the level of Dr. Johnson, and was not far short of the powers which would have made him a philosopher.

The next great qualifications of Bentley were ingenuity and (in the original sense of that term) sagacity. In these he excelled all the children of men, and as a verbal critic will probably never be rivalled. On this point I remember an objection to Bentley, stated forcibly by Mr. Coleridge ; and it seemed, at the time, unanswerable ; but a little reflection will disarm it. Mr. Coleridge had been noticing the coarseness and obtuseness of Bentley's poetic sensibilities, as indicated by his wild and unfeeling corruptions of the text in "Paradise Lost." Now, here, where our knowledge is perfectly equal to the task, we can all *feel* the deficiencies of Bentley : and Mr. Coleridge argued that a Grecian or Roman

of taste, if restored to life, would, perhaps, have an equally keen sense of the ludicrous in most of the emendations introduced by Bentley into the text of the ancient classics; a sense which, in these instances, is blunted or extinguished to us by our unfamiliar command over the two languages. But this plausible objection I have already answered in another place. The truth is that the ancient poets are, much more than the Christian poets, within the province of unimaginative good sense. Much might be said, and many forcible illustrations given, to show the distinction between the two cases; and that from a poet of the Miltonic order there is no inference to a poet such as Lucan, whose connexions, transitions, and all the process of whose thinking, go on by links of the most intelligible and definite ingenuity; still less any inference to a Greek lexicographer like Suidas, or Hesychius, whose thoughts and notices proceed in the humblest category of mere common sense. That is, it cannot in the remotest degree be argued that, because Bentley might fail in dealing with an author so superhumanly imaginative as Milton, any reason would arise upon such a failure for suspecting the soundness of his emendations in Ἰωαννιδίον (Jacky of Antioch), or even in Menander. Neither is it true that, with regard to Milton, Bentley has always failed. Many of his suggestions are sound. And, where they are not, this does not always argue bluntness of feeling, but, perhaps, mere defect of knowledge. Thus, for example, he has chosen, as I remember, to correct the passage,

> "That on the *secret* top
> Of Horeb or of Sinai," &c.

into *sacred* top; for he argued that the top of a mountain, exposed to the whole gaze of a surrounding country, must of all places be the least private or secret. But, had he happened to be familiar with mountains, though no higher than those of England, he would have understood that no secrecy is so complete, and so undisturbed by sound or gaze from below, as that of a mountain-top such as Helvellyn, Great Gavel, or Blencathara.[1] Here, therefore, he spoke from no

[1] The leading mountains about the centre of Borrowdale, Ennerdale, or Wastdale, range between three thousand and thirty-five hundred

defect of poetic feeling, but from pure defect of knowledge and of personal experience. And, after all, many of his better suggestions on the text of Milton will give an English reader an adequate notion of the extraordinary ingenuity with which he corrected the ancient classics.

A third qualification of Bentley, for one province of criticism at least, was the remarkable accuracy of his ear. Not that he had a peculiarly fine sense for the rhythmus of verse,—else the divine structure of the Miltonic blank verse would have preserved numerous fine passages from his "slashing" proscription. But the independent beauty of sounds, and the harsh effect from a jingle of syllables, no critic ever felt more keenly than he; and hence, on many occasions, he either derived originally, or afterwards supported, his corrections.

This fineness of ear perhaps first drew his attention to Greek metre; which he cultivated with success, and in that department may be almost said to have broken the ground.

The Digamma, and its functions, remain also trophies of his exquisite sagacity in hunting backward, upon the dimmest traces, into the aboriginal condition of things. The evidences of this knowledge, however, which Heyne used and published to the world, are simply his early and crude notes on the margin of his Homer. But the systematic treatise,

feet high; whereas the Alps range from ten to fifteen thousand; and in the Himalayas, which form the ramparts of Thibet and Hindostan, one peak has recently been discovered which runs up nearly to thirty thousand feet. Horeb and Sinai, of which it is that Milton speaks, reach (I believe) an altitude of eight or nine thousand. But let the experiment be tried on an eminence of thirty-five hundred feet amongst the English lakes: let one-half of a pic-nic party ascend, pitch a tent, hoist flags, and spread a table on the summit of Helvellyn; and let him who represents Bentley stay below in any of the valleys, radiating from that centre, which commands a clear view of the mountain head: what I say is that he will not be able without a glass to see the gay party of pic-nickers, nor the gay embroideries of the flags, nor the hyacinthine tresses of the lovely lasses, and therefore *à fortiori* he will not be able to see at all an object comparatively so base as a sirloin of beef. And, if the whole party should even—which let homage to female charms forbid!—fight like the pic-nic party of Centaurs and Lapithæ in old-world days, no justice of the peace could issue his warrant on the evidence of anything that he could see.

which he afterwards developed upon this foundation, was unknown to Heyne, and it is still unknown to the world. This fact, which is fully explained in Mr. Sandford's late excellent edition of Thiersch's Greek Grammar, has been entirely overlooked by Dr. Monk.

The same quality of sagacity, or the power of *investigating* backward (in the original sense of that metaphor), through the corruptions of two thousand years, the primary form of the reading which lay buried beneath them,—a faculty which in Bentley was in such excess that it led him to regard every MS. as a sort of figurative Palimpsest in which the early text had been overlaid by successive layers of alien matter,—was the fruitful source both of the faults and the merits of his wonderful editions. I listen with some impatience to Dr. Monk when he falls in with the common cant on this subject, as though Bentley had injured any of us by his new readings. Those whose taste is really fine enough to be offended by them (and I confess that, in a poet of such infinite delicacy as Horace, I myself am offended by the obtrusion of the new lections into the text) are at liberty to leave them. If but here and there they improve the text (and how little is *that* to say of them !), *lucro ponatur.* Besides, the received text, which Bentley displaced, was often as arbitrary as his own. Of this we have a pleasant example in the Greek Testament: that text, which it was held sacrilege in Bentley to disturb, was in fact the text of Mr. Stephens the printer (possibly of a clever compositor), who had thus unintentionally become a sort of *conscience* to the Protestant churches. It was no more, therefore, than a fair jest in Bentley, upon occasion of his own promised revision of the text, "Gentlemen, in me behold your Pope."

Dr. Monk regrets that Bentley forsook Greek studies so often for Latin ; so do I ; but not upon Dr. Monk's reason. *My* reason is not that Bentley was inferior, as a Latin scholar, to himself as a Grecian ; it is, that Grecians as good as he are much rarer than Latinists of the same rank. Silver coronets belong to the class of Latinists, golden to the Grecian.

Something must be said of Bentley's style. His Latinity

was assailed with petty malignity, in two set books, by Ker and Johnson. However, I see no justice in Dr. Monk's way of disparaging their criticisms, as being characteristic of schoolmasters. Why not? Slips are slips; faults are faults. Nor do I see how any distinction can be available between schoolmasters' Latin and the Latin of sublimer persons in silk aprons. The true distinction which could at all avail Bentley I take to be this:—In writing Latin there are two distinct merits of style; the first lies in the mere choice of the separate words; the second, in the structure and mould of the sentence. The former is within the reach of a boy armed with a suitable dictionary, which distinguishes the gold and silver words, and obelises the base Brummagem copper coinage of mediæval monkish[1] Latin. The other is the slow result of infinite practice and original tact. Few people ever attain it; few ever *could* attain it. Now, Bentley's defects were in the first accomplishment; and a stroke of the pen would everywhere have purified his *lexis*. But his great excellence was in the latter, where faults, like faults in the first digestion, are incapable of remedy. No correction, short of total extirpation, will reach *that* case: blotting will not avail: "*una* litura potest." His defect therefore is in a trifle; his success is in the rarest of attainments. Bentley is one of those who *think* in Latin, and not among the poor frosty translators into Latin under an overruling tyranny of English idiom. The phrase *puritas sermonis*, used for *purity of style*, illustrates Bentley's class of blemishes. I notice it because Ker, Dr. Monk, and Dr. Parr, have all concurred in condemning it. *Castitas* might be substituted for *puritas;* as to *sermonis* (*pace virorum tantorum*), it admits of superabundant apology. Do these gentlemen entertain the conceit that *sermo* means always and exclusively *conversation*, or colloquial communication?

Bentley's English style was less meritorious: but it was sinewy, native, idiomatic, though coarse and homely. He

[1] I condescend not to puns except on holidays; and, if I *did*, I have no ground for punning on the name of Dr. Monk. His edition of at least one Greek drama—viz. the "Hippolytus"—I have read with profit; and the Latin of his preface and notes, &c., is not at all *Monkish* in any bad sense.

took no pains with it: where the words fell, there they lay. He would not stop to modulate a tuneless sentence; and, like most great classical scholars of that day, he seemed to suppose that no modern language was capable of a better or worse.[1]

[1] In saying this, I uttered my sincere impression at the time. But larger communication with Bentley's English writings has inclined me to recall this opinion. Indeed, even in this erudite dissertation, dealing so exclusively with questions and phrases remote from ordinary life, Bentley shows himself a vigilant student of propriety in the use of English: for he first has laid down the true guiding law as to the *co* or the *con* in composition. One of the Boyle men had used the unlearned form *co*temporary: on which Bentley takes occasion to tell him very truly that this was vicious English: *co* always before a vowel; for example, *coëternal, coëval, coëssential;* but *con* before a consonant,—as, *e.g.*, contemporary, *consonant*, not *cosonant.* In algebra we all say *co-efficient*, and could not reconcile our eyes to con-efficient. But, says an antagonist of Bentley's rule, there *are* words which do not conform to it. Name them, if you please—name them; and I venture to predict that these cases will prove only *apparent* cases of exception. One instance given is *corrival.* Now mark. First of all, this case at any rate does not conform to that rule which Bentley opposed; for, if so, it should be *co-rival.* So that, if Bentley were wrong, the opponent of Bentley was still not right. But a moment's examination shows that here also Bentley's rule holds good. For there is a special modification of the rule applicable to the *liquid* consonants, at least to these three, *l, r, s.* In cases where any one of these occurs, the *n* of the *con* melts into an iteration of the particular liquid. Thus *lego, legĕre,* means *to gather;* whence *seligo* (or *seorsim* lego), to gather apart, to select; *conlĭgo*, to gather together. But, because the *n* of the *con* melts into a repetition of the liquid, which here happens to be *l*, therefore, instead of *conlĭgo*, we have colligo. Now, as the first of the two *l*s represents the *n* of the con, it is evident that the word for *collect* is not compounded with the *co*, but the *con.* There occurs to me at this moment another illustration which is interesting from its connexion with a celebrated man of genius. Richardson, the novelist, was undeniably such. But his education had been neglected; and of Latin he knew very little indeed. After the publication of "Clarissa," he gained a large train of epistolary correspondents, chiefly female. To one of these he was dwelling on ordinary faults of letters, foremost amongst which he counted want of feeling, or of rightly directed sympathy. Now this defect, said he, crosses the very purpose and original definition of correspondence by way of letter. For what does *correspondence* mean? It is a word of Latin origin; a compound word; and the two elements here brought together are *respondeo* (I answer), and *cor* (the heart): *i.e.*, I answer feelingly; "I reply, not so much to the head, as to the heart." This is amusing. But, though the case will hardly benefit any Latin grammar, it answers very well as illustrating Bentley's rule. *Con*, by

How much more nobly did the Roman scholars behave—Cicero, Varro, &c.—who, under every oppression of Greek models, still laboured to cultivate and adorn their own mother tongue! And even the example of Addison, whom Bentley so much admired, might have taught him another lesson ; for, though this graceful and genial writer, unacquainted with the deeper powers of the English language,[1] had flippantly pronounced it a "brick" edifice by comparison with the supposed marble temples of works composed in Attic Greek, yet he did not the less take pains to polish and improve it. Brick, even, has its own peculiar capacities of better and worse. Bentley's lawless pedantries of "*putid*" and "*negoce*,"[2] though countenanced by equal filth in L'Estrange

a common extension of its sense, means interchangeably ; and a *correspondent* is one who (*respondet*) keeps up a commerce of answers (*con*) reciprocally, or by alternate exchanges. Now, in fusing the prefix *con* with the verb respondeo, first of all, Bentley's rule takes place at least in its negative clause. *Respondeo* not beginning with a vowel, therefore it is not "*co*" that is prefixed. What remains? Why, *con ;* and this accordingly *is* the prefix : only that the *liquid r* compels the *n* to melt into another *r*. This illustration, as it takes its rise from a venial but still amusing blunder of Samuel Richardson, is likely to make itself remembered. This legislation of Bentley's has regulated the usage ever since,—*i.e.* for fully one hundred and sixty years. Strangely enough, however, not six months ago I observed a really learned man, unaware evidently of Bentley's rule, laying down the law quite otherwise, and therefore quite erroneously.

[1] Sir W. Temple knew of no Lord Bacon, unless as a lawyer; Milton and Jeremy Taylor knew not of each other ; and Addison had certainly never read Shakspere. I once believed (and therefore in the original edition of this little paper I boldly asserted) that Addison through all his writings had referred to Shakspere only once. This I have since found to be an error: but an error only as to the *letter* of the assertion. Virtually it is true. Inevitably, as an attendant habitually on the theatres, Addison could not fail to carry off some memorable passages and situations from the most popular and *scenic* of the Shaksperian dramas. To these remembrances, but rarely enough, Addison makes his references. As a book, however, to be read and studied, Shakspere was manifestly unknown to Addison, and totally beyond the range of his sympathies. [See *ante*, p. 24, *n.*—M.]

[2] This particular neologism of Bentley's, so exquisitely pedantic and so exquisitely useless, once drew me into a scrape at one of my schools with the presiding master. I was then ten years old, and my sense of the comic had been already irritated too keenly by hearing this word *negoce* cited as an authorised translation of *negotium*. But suddenly it occurred to me that *negotium* was undoubtedly no more

and many writers of the day, must, in any age, have been saluted with bursts of laughter; and his formal defence of the latter word was even more insufferably absurd than the barbarism which he justified. On the other hand, the word *ignore*, which he threw in the teeth of Mr. Boyle, had been used by that gentleman's illustrious uncle in many of his works: it is, in fact, Hibernian, which Bentley did not know; and in England is obsolete,[1] except in the use of grand juries. Being upon this subject, I must take the liberty of telling Dr. Monk that his own expressions of "*overhaul*" for *investigate*, and "*attackable*," are in the lowest style of colloquial slang. The expression of a "*duty*" being "*due*," which is somewhere to be found in his book, is even worse.

As a theologian, Bentley stood in the same circumstances as the late Bishop of Llandaff (Watson). The parallelism was striking. Both were irregularly built for that service; both drew off the eyes of the ill-natured, and compensated their deficiencies by *general* ability; both availed themselves of a fortunate opportunity for doing a *popular* service to Christianity, which set their names above the more fully accomplished (or, at least, the more regularly trained) theologians of their day; both carried, by a *coup-de-main*, the King's professorship of divinity at Cambridge, which to this

than the *negative* form of *otium*. So that a favourite sentiment with academic scholars—viz. *otium cum dignitate*—must in mere consistency be rendered by the authoriser of *negoce* as *oce in combination with dignity*. This proved too strong for my juvenile powers of self-control, and I laughed so loudly as to fall under the shadow of magisterial displeasure, and thus to incur a three days' penance; which gave me but little *oce* for further laughing, but scored deeply amongst my angry remembrances this "putid" abortion of Bentley's.

[1] I request the reader's attention to this clause, *and in England is obsolete, except in the use of grand juries.* It was written in the summer of 1830; at which time no vestige of a suspicion had arisen that very soon the word would be called back, or rather would be raised from a lifeless toleration in law-books to a popular and universal currency. It was a word much wanted; and one is now surprised how it could have been dispensed with. Yet there are pedants who, upon the merest shadow of an objection—viz., that our *immediate* predecessors did not use it, although our remote predecessors *did*—would even now (1857) ignore this indispensable word.

day is the richest in the world; and, finally, both, though far from unprincipled men, yet finding themselves sheltered from public reproach by the low-toned standard of conscientiousness prevailing in their own several generations, solemnly retreated from its duties.

In conclusion, I will venture to pronounce Dr. Bentley the greatest *man* amongst all scholars. In the complexion of his character and the style of his powers he resembled the elder Scaliger, having the same hardihood, energy, and elevation of mind. But Bentley had the advantage of earlier polish, and benefited by the advances of his age. He was, also, in spite of insinuations to the contrary, issuing from Mr. Boyle and his associates, favourably distinguished from the Scaligers, father and son, by constitutional good-nature, generosity, and placability. I should pronounce him, also, the greatest of *scholars*, were it not that I remember Salmasius. Dr. Parr was in the habit of comparing the Phalaris Dissertation with that of Salmasius "De Lingua Hellenistica." For my own part, I have always compared it with the same writer's "Plinian Exercitations." Both are among the miracles of human talent: but with this difference, that the Salmasian work is crowded with errors; whilst that of Bentley, in its latest revision, is absolutely without spot or blemish.[1]

In taking a final leave of any interesting man whom (whether as writers or as readers) we had accompanied through the chances and changes of a biographic record, although it is true that what in such a man first engaged our notice *must* have been something by which he was distinguished from his fellows, not the less what we should most regard in him when seen for the last time would be those points in which he simply resembled them. True it is that he never could have won the right to such a biographic memorial except by *differing* from his brothers: nevertheless it is certain that our last gaze would settle upon the points in which he *agreed* with them; upon his passions and his fortunes; upon the calamitous incidents of his life, and the magnanimity with which he supported them;

[1] The original paper in *Blackwood* ends here: the rest is addition in 1857.—M.

upon his infirmities as a child of earth, and his consolations as a child of heavenly hopes.

Bentley's life, through forty years (that is, through the entire period of his mature manhood), had been one unrelenting combat with malignant enemies. And yet this singular result had followed, that his enemies reaped the full harvest of mortification and wrath which such a rancorous feud was fitted to produce, whilst he through all this period had enjoyed a sunshine of perpetual peace. The storm had raved through forty years—tormenting the very air up to the barriers of Bentley's doors and windows; but it had never been suffered to gain an entrance, or to violate the sanctity of his happy fireside; even as the life-destroying vapours in coal-mines suffer an arrest at the very moment when they reach the meshes of the safety-lamp. One golden sanctuary did Bentley enjoy, and *that* was his own hearth; one unfailing comforter, and *that* was his own wife.

Her at length he lost. From her, after a union of forty years, during which her confidential advice, but still more her faithful sympathy, had cheered and sustained him, often through great difficulties, but at some periods through great dangers, at last the grave parted him. And the opinion of all men was that now beyond a doubt he would drift away into hopeless gloom. But, just as his last anchor was unsettling, and beginning to drive before this great billowy anguish, suddenly a new morning of consolation ascended for *him*—a resurrection of pathetic hopes. His married daughter came to Trinity Lodge, and by her pious attentions first of all recalled him from wandering thoughts and unprofitable fretting. Next, she drew him at intervals within the circle of her children; led him to take an interest in their joyous sports; and filled his halls with the music of infant laughter, which for seventy years had been a sound unknown to *him*. An Indian summer crept stealthily over his closing days; a summer less gaudy than the mighty summer of the solstice, but sweet, golden, silent; happy, though sad; and to Bentley, upon whom (now eighty years old) his last fatal illness rushed as suddenly as it moved rapidly through all its stages, it was never known that this

sweet mimicry of summer—a spiritual or fairy echo of a mighty music that has departed—is as frail and transitory as it is solemn, quiet, and lovely.[1]

[1] The Indian summer of Canada, and I believe universally of the Northern United States, is in November; at which season in *some* climates a brief echo of summer uniformly occurs. It is a mistake to suppose it unknown in Europe. Throughout Germany (I believe also Russia) it is popularly known, sometimes as *The Old Woman's Summer*, sometimes as *The Girl's Summer*. A natural question arises —what lurking suggestion it is of dim ideas or evanescent images that confers upon the Indian summer its peculiar interest. Already in its German and Livonian names we may read an indication that by its primary feature this anomalous season came forward as a *feminine* reflection of a power in itself by fervour and creative energy essentially *masculine;* a *lunar* image of an agency that, by its rapture and headlong life, was imperishably *solar*. Secondly, it was regarded as a dependency, as a season that looked back to something that had departed, a faint memorial (like the light of setting suns) recalling an archetype of splendours that were hurrying to oblivion. Thirdly, it was itself attached by its place in the succession of annual phenomena to the *departing* year. By a triple title, therefore, the Indian summer was beautiful, and was sad. For august grandeur, self-sustained, it substituted a frailty of loveliness; and, for the riot and torrent rapture of joy in the fulness of possession, exchanged the moonlight hauntings of a visionary and saddened remembrance. In short, what the American Indian race itself at this time is, *that* the Indian summer represents symbolically—viz. the most perfect amongst human revelations of grace in form and movement, but under a *visible* fatality of decay.[2]

[2] Many writers, but above all others Mrs. Jameson (an exquisite observer), have noticed the incomparable grace in bodily conformation, in motion, and in attitude, of the American Indian race. And many more writers have made us acquainted with its numerical declension. From forty millions it has sunk in two centuries to six; and in two centuries more an Indian will be exhibited as a show.[3]

[3] It has been thought unnecessary, in the case of this biography of Bentley, to intersperse any editorial notes with the already numerous notes of De Quincey himself,—partly because effective annotation would have had to be endless in the case of a paper so bristling with names and learned allusions, and partly because notes of the ordinary sort seemed useless for likely or competent readers of such a peculiar paper. For those whom the subject may interest (and De Quincey was the first to invest it with a strong popular interest) Professor Jebb's later biography of Bentley, published in 1882 as one of the volumes of Messrs. Macmillan's *English Men of Letters* series, will serve as an admirably instructive sequel, and, in some points, a corrective.—M.

ALEXANDER POPE[1]

Alexander Pope, the most brilliant of all wits who have at any period applied themselves to the poetic treatment of human manners, to the selecting from the play of human character what is picturesque, or the arresting what is fugitive, was born in the city of London on the 21st[2] day of May in the memorable year 1688 ; about six months, therefore, before the landing of the Prince of Orange and the opening of that great revolution which gave the final ratification to all previous revolutions of that tempestuous century. By the "city" of London the reader is to understand us as speaking with technical accuracy of that district which lies within the ancient walls and the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor. The parents of Pope, there is good reason to think, were of "gentle blood" ; which is the expression of the poet himself when describing them in verse. His mother was so undoubtedly ; and her illustrious son, in speaking of her to Lord Hervey at a time when any exaggeration was open to an easy refutation, and writing in a spirit most likely to provoke it, does not scruple to say, with a tone of dignified haughtiness not unbecoming the situation of a filial champion on behalf of an insulted mother, that by

[1] Contributed to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.—M.

[2] Dr. Johnson, however, and Joseph Warton, for reasons not stated, have placed his birth on the 22d. [See appended note at the end of this paper.]

birth and descent she was not below that young lady (one of the two beautiful Miss Lepels) whom his lordship had selected from all the choir of court beauties as the future mother of his children. Of Pope's extraction and immediate lineage for a space of two generations we know enough; beyond that we know little: of this little a part is dubious; and what we are disposed to receive as *not* dubious rests chiefly on his own authority. In the prologue to his Satires, having occasion to notice the lampooners of the times, who had represented his father as "a mechanic, a hatter, a farmer, nay, a bankrupt," he feels himself called upon to state the truth about his parents; and naturally much more so at a time when the low scurrilities of these obscure libellers had been adopted, accredited, and diffused by persons so distinguished in all points of personal accomplishment and rank as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey: "*Hard as thy heart,*" was one of the lines in their joint pasquinade, "*Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure.*" Accordingly he makes the following formal statement:—"Mr. Pope's father was of a gentleman's family in "Oxfordshire, the head of which was the Earl of Downe. "His mother was the daughter of William Turner, Esq., of "York; she had three brothers, one of whom was killed; "another died in the service of King Charles [meaning "Charles I.]; the eldest, following his fortunes, and becom- "ing a general officer in Spain, left *her* what estate remained "after the sequestrations and forfeitures of her family." The sequestrations here spoken of were those inflicted by the commissioners for the Parliament; and usually they levied a fifth, or even two-fifths, according to the apparent delinquency of the parties. But in such cases two great differences arose in the treatment of the royalists: first, that the report was coloured according to the interest which a man possessed, or other private means for biassing the commissioners; secondly, that often, when money could not be raised on mortgage to meet the sequestration, it became necessary to sell a family estate suddenly, and therefore in those times at great loss; so that a nominal fifth might be depressed by favour to a tenth, or raised by the necessity of selling to a half. And hence might arise the small dowry of Mrs. Pope,

notwithstanding the family estate in Yorkshire had centred in her person. But, by the way, we see from the fact of the eldest brother having sought service in Spain that Mrs. Pope was a Papist; not, like her husband, by conversion, but by hereditary faith. This account, as publicly thrown out in the way of challenge by Pope, was, however, sneered at by a certain Mr. Pottinger of those days; who, together with his absurd name, has been safely transmitted to posterity in connexion with this single feat of having contradicted Alexander Pope. We read, in a diary published by the Microcosm, "*Met a large hat with a man under it.*" And so, here, we cannot so properly say that Mr. Pottinger brings down the contradiction to our times as that the contradiction brings down Mr. Pottinger. "Cousin Pope," said Pottinger, "had made himself out a fine pedigree, but he wondered where he got it"; and he then goes on to plead, in abatement of Pope's pretensions, "that an old maiden aunt, equally related" (that is, standing in the same relation to himself and to the poet), "a great genealogist, who was always talking of her family, never mentioned this circumstance." And again we are told, from another quarter, that the Earl of Guildford, after express investigation of this matter, "was sure that," amongst the descendants of the Earls of Downe, "there was none of the name of Pope." How it was that Lord Guildford came to have any connexion with the affair is not stated by the biographers of Pope; but we have ascertained that, by marriage with a female descendant from the Earls of Downe, he had come into possession of their English estates.

Finally, though it is rather for the honour of the Earls of Downe than of Pope to make out the connexion, we must observe that Lord Guildford's testimony, *if ever given at all*, is simply negative; he had found no proofs of the connexion, but he had not found any proofs to destroy it; whilst, on the other hand, it ought to be mentioned, though unaccountably overlooked by all previous biographers, that one of Pope's anonymous enemies, who hated him personally, but was apparently master of his family history, and too honourable to belie his own convictions, expressly affirms, of his own authority, and without reference to any claim put forward

by Pope, that he was descended from a junior branch of the Downe family; which testimony has a double value: first, as corroborating the probability of Pope's statement viewed in the light of a fact; and, secondly, as corroborating that same statement viewed in the light of a current story, true or false, and not as a disingenuous fiction put forward by Pope to confute Lord Hervey.

It is probable to us that the Popes, who had been originally transplanted from England to Ireland, had, in the person of some cadet, been re-transplanted to England; and that, having in that way been disconnected from all personal recognition, and all local memorials of the capital house, by this sort of *postliminium*, the junior branch had ceased to cherish the honour of a descent which was now divided from all direct advantage. At all events, the researches of Pope's biographers have not been able to trace him farther back in the paternal line than to his grandfather; and he (which is odd enough, considering the Popery of his descendants) was a clergyman of the Established Church, in Hampshire. This grandfather had two sons. Of the eldest nothing is recorded beyond the three facts, that he went to Oxford, that he died there, and that he spent the family estate.[1] The younger son, whose name was Alexander, had been sent when young, in some commercial character, to Lisbon[2]; and there it was, in that centre of bigotry, that he became a sincere and most disinterested Catholic. He returned to England, married a Catholic young widow, and became the father of a second Alexander Pope, *ultra Sauromatas notus et Antipodes.*

By his own account to Spence, Pope learnt "very early to read"; and writing he taught himself "by copying from printed books"; all which seems to argue that, as an only child, with an indolent father and a most indulgent mother, he was not molested with much schooling in his infancy. Only one adventure is recorded of his childhood,—viz. that

[1] It is apparently with allusion to this part of his history, which he would often have heard from the lips of his own father, that Pope glances at his uncle's memory somewhat disrespectfully in his prose letter to Lord Hervey.

[2] Some accounts, however, say to Flanders; in which case, perhaps, Antwerp or Brussels would have the honour of his conversion.

he was attacked by a cow, thrown down, and wounded in the throat.

Pope escaped this disagreeable kind of vaccination without serious injury, and was not farther tormented by cows or schoolmasters until he was about eight years old, when the family priest,—that is, we presume, the confessor of his parents,—taught him, agreeably to the Jesuit system, the rudiments of Greek and Latin concurrently. This priest was named Banister ; and his name is frequently employed, together with other fictitious names, by way of signature to the notes in the *Dunciad*, an artifice which was adopted for the sake of giving a characteristic variety to the notes, according to the tone required for the illustration of the text. From his tuition Pope was at length dismissed to a Catholic school at Twyford, near Winchester. The selection of a school in this neighbourhood, though certainly the choice of a Catholic family was much limited, points apparently to the old Hampshire connexion of his father. Here an incident occurred which most powerfully illustrates the original and constitutional determination to satire of this irritable poet. He knew himself so accurately that, in after times, half by way of boast, half of confession, he says,—

> "But touch me, and no Minister so sore :
> Whoe'er offends at some unlucky time
> Slides into verse and hitches in a rhyme,
> Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
> And the sad burthen of some merry song."

Already, it seems, in childhood he had the same irresistible instinct, victorious over the strongest sense of personal danger. He wrote a bitter satire upon the presiding pedagogue, was brutally punished for this youthful indiscretion, and indignantly removed by his parents from the school. Mr. Roscoe speaks of Pope's personal experience as necessarily unfavourable to public schools ; but in reality he knew nothing of public schools.[1] All the establishments for Papists were narrow, and suited to their political depression ; and his parents were too sincerely anxious for their son's

[1] The reference, I suppose, is to the Life of Pope by William Roscoe (author of *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, etc.), in his edition of Pope's Works in 10 volumes, published in 1824.—M.

religious principles to risk the contagion of Protestant association by sending him elsewhere.

From the scene[1] of his disgrace and illiberal punishment, he passed, according to the received accounts, under the tuition of several other masters in rapid succession. But it is the less necessary to trouble the reader with their names, as Pope himself assures us that he learned nothing from any of them. To Banister he had been indebted for such trivial elements of a schoolboy's learning as he possessed at all, excepting those which he had taught himself. And upon himself it was, and his own admirable faculties, that he was now finally thrown for the rest of his education, at an age so immature that many boys are then first entering their academic career. Pope is supposed to have been scarcely twelve years old when he assumed the office of self-tuition and bade farewell for ever to schools and tutors.

Such a phenomenon is at any rate striking; it is the more so under the circumstances which attended the plan, and under the results which justified its execution. It seems, as regards the plan, hardly less strange that prudent parents should have acquiesced in a scheme of so much peril to his intellectual interests, than that the son, as regards the execution, should have justified their confidence by his final success. More especially this confidence surprises us in the father. A doting mother might shut her eyes to all remote evils in the present gratification to her affections; but Pope's father was a man of sense and principle; he must have weighed the risks besetting a boy left to his own intellectual guidance; and to these risks he would allow the more weight from his own conscious defect of scholarship and inability to guide or even to accompany his son's studies. He could neither direct the proper choice of studies, nor in any one study taken separately could he suggest the proper choice of books.

The case we apprehend to have been this:—Alexander Pope the elder was a man of philosophical desires and unambitious character. Quiet and seclusion and innocence of life,—these were what he affected for himself; and that which had been found available for his own happiness he

[1] See De Quincey's note at end of this paper.—M.

might reasonably wish for his son. The two hinges upon which his plans may be supposed to have turned were, first, the political degradation of his sect, and, secondly, the fact that his son was an only child. Had he been a Protestant, or had he, though a Papist, been burdened with a large family of children, he would doubtless have pursued a different course. But to him, and, as he sincerely hoped, to his son, the strife after civil honours was sternly barred. Apostasy only could lay it open. And, as the sentiments of honour and duty in this point fell in with the vices of his temperament, high principle concurring with his constitutional love of ease, we need not wonder that he should early retire from commerce with a very moderate competence, or that he should suppose the same fortune sufficient for one who was to stand in the same position. This son was from his birth deformed. That made it probable that he might not marry. If he should, and happened to have children, a small family would find an adequate provision in the patrimonial funds ; and a large one, at the worst, could only throw him upon the same commercial exertions to which he had been obliged himself. The Roman Catholics, indeed, were just then situated as our modern Quakers are : law to the one, as conscience to the other, closed all modes of active employment except that of commercial industry. Either his son, therefore, would be a rustic recluse, or, like himself, he would be a merchant.

With such prospects, what need of an elaborate education ? And where was such an education to be sought ? At the petty establishments of the suffering Catholics, the instruction, as he had found experimentally, was poor. At the great national establishments his son would be a degraded person,—one who was permanently repelled from every arena of honour, and sometimes, as in cases of public danger, was banished from the capital, deprived of his house, left defenceless against common ruffians, and rendered liable to the control of every village magistrate. To one in these circumstances solitude was the wisest position ; and the best qualification for that was an education that would furnish aids to solitary thought. No need for brilliant accomplishments to him who must never display them ; forensic arts, pulpit

erudition, senatorial eloquence, academical accomplishments, —these would be lost to one against whom the courts, the pulpit, the senate, the universities were closed. Nay, by possibility worse than lost ; they might prove so many snares or positive bribes to apostasy. Plain English, therefore, and the high thinking of his compatriot authors, might prove the best provision for the mind of an English Papist destined to seclusion.

Such are the considerations under which we read and interpret the conduct of Pope's parents ; and they lead us to regard as wise and conscientious a scheme which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been pitiably foolish. And be it remembered that to these considerations, derived exclusively from the civil circumstances of the family, were superadded others derived from the astonishing prematurity of the individual. That boy who could write at twelve years of age the beautiful and touching stanzas on Solitude might well be trusted with the superintendence of his own studies. And the stripling of sixteen, who could so far transcend in good sense the accomplished statesmen or men of the world with whom he afterwards corresponded, might challenge confidence for such a choice of books as would best promote the development of his own faculties.

In reality, one so finely endowed as Alexander Pope could not easily lose his way in the most extensive or ill-digested library. And, though he tells Atterbury that at one time he abused his opportunities by reading controversial divinity, we may be sure that his own native activities, and the elasticity of his mind, would speedily recoil into a just equilibrium of study, under wider and happier opportunities. Reading, indeed, for a person like Pope, is rather valuable as a means of exciting his own energies, and of feeding his own sensibilities, than for any direct acquisitions of knowledge, or for any trains of systematic research. All men are destined to devour much rubbish between the cradle and the grave ; and doubtless the man who is wisest in the choice of his books will have read many a page before he dies that a thoughtful review would pronounce worthless. This is the fate of all men. But the reading of Pope, as a general result or measure of his judicious choice, is best justified in his

writings. They show him well furnished with whatsoever he wanted for matter or for embellishment, for argument or illustration, for example and model, or for direct and explicit imitation.

Possibly, as we have already suggested, within the range of English Literature Pope might have found all that he wanted. But variety the widest has its uses; and, for the extension of his influence with the polished classes amongst whom he lived, he did wisely to add other languages; and a question has thus arisen with regard to the extent of Pope's attainments as a self-taught linguist. A man, or even a boy, of great originality, may happen to succeed best in working his own native mines of thought by his unassisted energies; here it is granted that a tutor, a guide, or even a companion, may be dispensed with, and even beneficially. But in the case of foreign languages, in attaining this machinery of literature,—though anomalies even here do arise, and men there are, like Joseph Scaliger, who form their own dictionaries and grammars in the mere process of reading an unknown language,—by far the major part of students will lose their time by rejecting the aid of tutors. As there has been much difference of opinion with regard to Pope's skill in languages, we shall briefly collate and bring into one focus the stray notices.

As to the French, Voltaire, who knew Pope personally, declared that he "could hardly *read* it, and spoke not one syllable of the language." But perhaps Voltaire might dislike Pope? On the contrary, he was acquainted with his works, and admired them to the very level of their merits. Speaking of him *after death* to Frederick of Prussia, he prefers him to Horace and Boileau, asserting that, by comparison with *them*,

> "Pope *approfondit* ce qu'ils ont *effleuré*.
> D'un esprit plus hardi, d'un pas plus assuré,
> Il porta le flambeau dans l'abîme de l'être;
> Et l'homme *avec lui seul* apprit à se connoître.
> L'art quelquefois frivole, et quelquefois divine,
> L'art des vers est dans Pope utile au genre humain."

This is not a wise account of Pope, for it does not abstract the characteristic feature of his power; but it is a very kind

one. And of course Voltaire could not have meant any unkindness in denying his knowledge of French. But he was certainly wrong. Pope, in *his* presence, would decline to speak or to read a language of which the pronunciation was confessedly beyond him. Or, if he did, the impression left would be still worse. In fact, no man ever will pronounce or talk a language which he does not use, for some part of every day, in the real intercourse of life. But that Pope read French of an ordinary cast with fluency enough is evident from the extensive use which he made of Madame Dacier's labours on the "Iliad," and still more of La Valterie's prose translation of the "Iliad." Already in the year 1718, and long before his personal knowledge of Voltaire, Pope had shown his accurate acquaintance with some voluminous French authors in a way which, we suspect, was equally surprising and offensive to his noble correspondent. The Duke of Buckingham[1] had addressed to Pope a letter containing some account of the controversy about Homer which had then been recently carried on in France between La Motte and Madame Dacier. This account was delivered with an air of teaching which was very little in harmony with its excessive shallowness. Pope, who sustained the part of pupil in this interlude, replied in a manner that exhibited a knowledge of the parties concerned in the controversy much superior to that of the Duke. In particular, he characterized the excellent notes upon Horace of M. Dacier the husband in very just terms, as distinguished from those of his conceited and half-learned wife; and the whole reply of Pope seems very much as though he had been playing off a mystification on his Grace. Undoubtedly the pompous duke felt that he

[1] That is, Sheffield, and, legally speaking, of Buckingham-*shire*. For he would not take the title of Buckingham, under a fear that there was lurking somewhere or other a claim to that title amongst the connexions of the Villiers family. He was a pompous grandee, who lived in uneasy splendour, and, as a writer, most extravagantly overrated; accordingly, he is now forgotten. Such was his vanity, and his ridiculous mania for allying himself with royalty, that he first of all had the presumption to court the Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne. Being rejected, he then offered himself to the illegitimate daughter of James II by the daughter of Sir Charles Sedley. She was as ostentatious as himself, and accepted him.

had caught a Tartar. Now, M. Dacier's "Horace," which, with the text, fills nine volumes, Pope could not have read *except* in French; for they are not even yet translated into English. Besides, Pope read critically the French translation of his own "Essay on Man," "Essay on Criticism," "Rape of the Lock," &c. He spoke of them as a critic; and it was at no time a fault of Pope's to make false pretensions. All readers of Pope's Satires must also recollect numerous proofs that he had read Boileau with so much feeling of his peculiar merit that he has appropriated and naturalized in English some of his best passages. Voltaire was therefore certainly wrong.

Of Italian literature, meantime, Pope knew little or nothing; and simply because he knew nothing of the language. Tasso, indeed, he admired; and, which is singular, more than Ariosto. But we believe that he had read him only in English; and it is certain that he could not take up an Italian author, either in prose or verse, for the unaffected amusement of his leisure.

Greek, we all know, has been denied to Pope, ever since he translated Homer, and chiefly in consequence of that translation. This seems at first sight unfair, because criticism has not succeeded in fixing upon Pope any errors of ignorance. His deviations from Homer were uniformly the result of imperfect sympathy with the naked simplicity of the antique, and therefore wilful deviations, not (like those of his more pretending competitors, Addison and Tickell) pure blunders of misapprehension. But yet it is not inconsistent with this concession to Pope's merits that we must avow our belief in his thorough ignorance of Greek when he first commenced his task. And to us it seems astonishing that nobody should have adverted to that fact as a sufficient solution, and in fact the only plausible solution, of Pope's excessive depression of spirits in the earliest stage of his labours. This depression, after he had once pledged himself to his subscribers for the fulfilment of his task, arose from, and could have arisen from nothing else than, his conscious ignorance of Greek, in connexion with the solemn responsibilities he had assumed in the face of a great nation. Nay, even countries as presumptuously disdainful

of tramontane literature as Italy took an interest in this memorable undertaking. Bishop Berkeley found Salvini reading it at Florence; and Madame Dacier even, who read little but Greek, and certainly no English until then, condescended to study it. Pope's dejection, therefore, or rather agitation (for it impressed by sympathy a tumultuous character upon his dreams which lasted for years after the cause had ceased to operate) was perfectly natural under the explanation we have given, but not otherwise. And how did he surmount this unhappy self-distrust? Paradoxical as it may sound, we will venture to say that, with the innumerable aids for interpreting Homer which even then existed, a man sufficiently acquainted with Latin might make a translation even critically exact. This Pope was not long in discovering. Other alleviations of his labour concurred, and in a ratio daily increasing.

The same formulæ were continually recurring, such as,

But him answering thus addressed the swift-footed Achilles;

Or,

But, him sternly beholding, thus spoke Agamemnon, the king of men.

Then, again, universally the Homeric Greek, from many causes, is easy; and especially from these two: 1*st*, The simplicity of the thought, which never gathers into those perplexed knots of rhetorical condensation which we find in the dramatic poets of a higher civilization; 2*dly*, From the constant bounds set to the expansion of the thought by the form of the metre,—an advantage of verse which makes the poets so much easier to a beginner in the German language than the illimitable weavers of prose. The line or the stanza reins up the poet tightly to his theme, and will not suffer him to expatiate. Gradually, therefore, Pope came to read the Homeric Greek, but never accurately; nor did he ever read Eustathius without aid from Latin.[1] As to any knowledge of the Attic Greek, of the Greek of the dramatists, the Greek of Plato, the Greek of Demosthenes, Pope neither

[1] Eustathius, Archbishop of Thessalonica, a learned Greek of the twelfth century, author of a large commentary, or collection of commentaries, on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.—M.

had it nor affected to have it. Indeed it was no foible of Pope's, as we will repeat, to make claims which he had not, or even to dwell ostentatiously upon those which he had. And, with respect to Greek in particular, there is a manuscript letter in existence from Pope to a Mr. Bridges at Falham, which, speaking of the original Homer, distinctly records the knowledge which he had of his own "imperfectness in the language." Chapman, a most spirited translator of Homer, probably had no very critical skill in Greek; and Hobbes was, beyond all question, as poor a Grecian as he was a doggerel translator; yet in this letter Pope professes his willing submission to the "authority" of Chapman and Hobbes, as superior to his own.[1]

Finally, in *Latin* Pope was a "considerable proficient," even by the cautious testimony of Dr. Johnson; and in this language only the doctor was an accomplished critic. If Pope had really the proficiency here ascribed to him, he must have had it already in his boyish years; for the translation from Statius, which is the principal monument of his skill, was executed *before* he was fourteen. We have taken the trouble to throw a hasty glance over it; and, whilst we readily admit the extraordinary talent which it shows, as do all the juvenile essays of Pope, we cannot allow that it argues any accurate skill in Latin. The word Malĕa, as we have seen noticed by some editor, he makes Malēa; which in itself, as the name was not of common occurrence, would not have been an error worth noticing, but, taken in connexion with the certainty that Pope had the original line before him,—

> "Arripit ex templo Maleæ de valle resurgens,"

when not merely the scanning theoretically, but the whole rhythmus practically, to the most obtuse ear, would be annihilated by Pope's false quantity,—is a blunder which serves to show his utter ignorance of prosody. But, even as

[1] The first portion of Chapman's translation of Homer was published in 1598, and his translation of the whole of the *Iliad* and the whole of the *Odyssey* was complete before 1616 Hobbes's translation of Homer was one of his latest works, and was completed in 1675.—M.

a version of the sense, with every allowance for a poet's licence of compression and expansion, Pope's translation is defective, and argues an occasional inability to construe the text. For instance, at the council summoned by Jupiter, it is said that he at his first entrance seats himself upon his starry throne, but not so the inferior gods :

> "Nec protinus ausi
> Cœlicolæ, veniam donec pater ipse sedendi
> Tranquilla jubet esse manu."

In which passage there is a slight obscurity, from the ellipsis of the word *sedere*, or *sese locare;* but the meaning is evidently that the other gods did not presume to sit down *protinus*, that is, in immediate succession to Jupiter, and interpreting his example as a tacit licence to do so, until, by a gentle wave of his hand, the supreme father signifies his express permission to take their seats. But Pope, manifestly unable to extract any sense from the passage, translates thus :—

> "At Jove's assent the deities around,
> In solemn state, the consistory *crown'd*" ;

where at once the whole picturesque solemnity of the celestial ritual melts into the vaguest generalities. Again, at v. 178, *ruptæque vices* is translated *"and all the ties of nature broke"*; but by *vices* is indicated the alternate reign of the two brothers, as ratified by mutual oaths, and subsequently violated by Eteocles. Other mistakes might be cited which seem to prove that Pope, like most self-taught linguists, was a very imperfect one.[1] Pope, in short, never rose to such a point in classical literature as to read either Greek or Latin authors without effort, and for his private amusement.

The result, therefore, of Pope's self-tuition appears to us, considered in the light of an attempt to acquire certain accomplishments of knowledge, a most complete failure. As a linguist, he read no language with ease ; none with pleasure to himself; and none with so much accuracy as could have carried him through the most popular author

[1] See De Quincey's note at the end of this paper.—M.

with a general independence on interpreters. But, considered with a view to his particular faculties and slumbering originality of power,—which required perhaps the stimulation of accident to arouse them effectually,—we are very much disposed to think that the very failure of his education as an artificial training was a great advantage finally for inclining his mind to throw itself, by way of indemnification, upon its native powers. Had he attained, as with better tuition he would have attained, distinguished excellence as a scholar, or as a student of science, the chances are many that he would have settled down into such studies as thousands could pursue not less successfully than he; whilst, as it was, the very dissatisfaction which he could not but feel with his slender attainments must have given him a strong motive for cultivating those impulses of original power which he felt continually stirring within him, and which were vivified into trials of competition as often as any distinguished excellence was introduced to his knowledge.

Pope's father, at the time of his birth, lived in Lombard Street,[1]—a street still familiar to the public eye from its adjacency to some of the chief metropolitan establishments, and to the English ear possessing a degree of historical importance: first, as the residence of those Lombards, or Milanese, who affiliated our infant commerce to the matron splendours of the Adriatic and the Mediterranean; next, as the central resort of those jewellers, or "goldsmiths," as they were styled, who performed all the functions of modern bankers from the period of the Parliamentary War to the rise of the Bank of England,—that is, for six years after the birth of Pope; and, lastly, as the seat, until lately, of that vast post-office through which, for so long a period, has passed the correspondence of all nations and languages, upon a scale unknown to any other country. In this street Alexander Pope the elder had a house, and a warehouse, we presume, annexed, in which he conducted the wholesale business of a linen merchant. As soon as he had made a

[1] One writer of that age says in Cheapside: but probably this difference arose from contemplating Lombard Street as a prolongation of Cheapside.

moderate fortune he retired from business, first to Kensington, and afterwards to Binfield in Windsor Forest. The period of this migration is not assigned by any writer. It is probable that a prudent man would not adopt it with any prospect of having more children. But this chance might be considered as already extinguished at the birth of Pope; for, though his father had then only attained his forty-fourth year, Mrs. Pope had completed her forty-eighth. It is probable, from the interval of seven days which is said to have elapsed between Pope's punishment and his removal from the school, that his parents were then living at such a distance from him as to prevent his ready communication with them; else we may be sure that Mrs. Pope would have flown on the wings of love and wrath to the rescue of her darling. Supposing, therefore, as we *do* suppose, that Mr. Bromley's school in London was the scene of his disgrace, it would appear on this argument that his parents were then living in Windsor Forest. And this hypothesis falls in with another anecdote in Pope's life, which we know partly upon his own authority. He tells Wycherley that he had seen Dryden, and barely seen him. *Virgilium vidi tantum.* This is presumed to have been in Will's Coffee-house, whither any person in search of Dryden would of course resort; and it must have been before Pope was twelve years old, for Dryden died in 1700. Now, there is a letter of Sir Charles Wogan's stating that he first took Pope to Will's, and his words are "from our forest." Consequently, at that period, when he had not completed his twelfth year, Pope was already living in the forest.

From this period, and so long as the genial spirits of youth lasted, Pope's life must have been one dream of pleasure. He tells Lord Hervey that his mother did not spoil him; but that was no doubt because there was no room for wilfulness or waywardness on either side, when all was one placid scene of parental obedience and gentle filial authority. We feel persuaded that, if not in words, in spirit and inclination, they would, in any notes they might have occasion to write, subscribe themselves "your dutiful parents." And of what consequence in whose hands were the reins which were never needed? Every reader must be

pleased to know that these idolizing parents lived to see their son at the very summit of his public elevation. Even his father lived two years and a-half after the publication of his "Homer" had commenced,[1] and when his fortune was made; and his mother lived for nearly eighteen years more.[2] What a felicity for her, how rare and how perfect, to find that he, who to her maternal eyes was naturally the most perfect of human beings, and the idol of her heart, had already been the idol of the nation before he had completed his youth. She had also another blessing, not always commanded by the most devoted love: many sons there are who think it essential to manliness that they should treat their mother's doting anxiety with levity, or even ridicule; but Pope, who was the model of a good son, never swerved, in words, manners, or conduct, from the most respectful tenderness, or intermitted the piety of his attentions. And so far did he carry this regard for his mother's comfort that, well knowing how she lived upon his presence or by his image, he denied himself for many years all excursions which could not be fully accomplished within the revolution of a week. And to this cause, combined with the excessive length of his mother's life, must be ascribed the fact that Pope never went abroad: not to Italy, with Thomson or with Berkeley, or any of his diplomatic friends; not to Ireland, where his presence would have been hailed as a national honour; not even to France, on a visit to his admiring and admired friend Lord Bolingbroke. For, as to the fear of sea-sickness, *that* did not arise until a late period of his life, and at any period would not have operated to prevent his crossing from Dover to Calais. It is possible that, in his earlier and more sanguine years, all the perfection of his filial love may not have availed to prevent him from now and then breathing a secret murmur at confinement so constant. But it is certain that, long before he passed the meridian of his life, Pope had come to view this confinement with far other thoughts. Experience had then taught him that to no man is the privilege granted of possessing more than one or two friends who are such in extremity. By that time he had come to view his mother's death with fear and anguish. She, he

[1] He died in 1717, *ætat.* 75.—M. [2] She died in 1733, *ætat.* 93.—M.

knew by many a sign, would have been happy to lay down her life for his sake; but, for others, even those who were the most friendly and the most constant in their attentions, he felt but too certainly that his death, or his heavy affliction, might cost them a few sighs, but would not materially disturb their peace of mind. "It is but in a very narrow circle," says he, in a confidential letter, "that friendship walks in this world, and I care not to tread out of it more than I needs must; knowing well it is but to two or three (if quite so many) that any man's welfare or memory can be of consequence." After such acknowledgments, we are not surprised to find him writing thus of his mother, and his fearful struggles to fight off the shock of his mother's death, at a time when it was rapidly approaching. After having said of a friend's death, "The subject is beyond writing upon, beyond cure or ease by reason or reflection, beyond all but one thought that it is the will of God," he goes on thus, "So will the death of my mother be, which now I tremble at, now resign to, now bring close to me, now set farther off; every day alters, turns me about, confuses my whole frame of mind." There is no pleasure, he adds, which the world can give, "equivalent to countervail either the death of one I have so long lived with, or of one I have so long lived for." How will he comfort himself after her death? "I have nothing left but to turn my thoughts to one comfort, the last we usually think of, though the only one we should in wisdom depend upon. I sit in her room, and she is always present before me but when I sleep. I wonder I am so well. I have shed many tears; but now I weep at nothing."

A man, therefore, happier than Pope in his domestic relations cannot easily have lived. It is true these relations were circumscribed; had they been wider they could not have been so happy. But Pope was equally fortunate in his social relations. What, indeed, most of all surprises us is the courteous, flattering, and even brilliant reception which Pope found from his earliest boyhood amongst the most accomplished men of the world. Wits, courtiers, statesmen, grandees the most dignified, and men of fashion the most brilliant, all alike treated him not only with pointed kind-

ness, but with a respect that seemed to acknowledge him as their intellectual superior. Without rank, high birth, fortune, without even a literary name, and in defiance of a deformed person, Pope, whilst yet only sixteen years of age, was caressed, and even honoured ; and all this with no one recommendation but simply the knowledge of his dedication to letters, and the premature expectations which he raised of future excellence. Sir William Trumbull, a veteran statesman, who had held the highest stations, both diplomatic and ministerial, made him his daily companion. Wycherley, the old *roué* of the town, a second-rate wit, but not the less jealous on that account, showed the utmost deference to one whom, as a man of fashion, he must have regarded with contempt, and between whom and himself there were nearly "fifty good years of fair and foul weather." Cromwell,[1] a fox-hunting country gentleman, but uniting with that character the pretensions of a wit, and affecting also the reputation of a rake, cultivated his regard with zeal and conscious inferiority. Nay,—which never in any other instance happened to the most fortunate poet,—his very inaugural essays in verse were treated, not as prelusive efforts of auspicious promise, but as finished works of art, entitled to take their station amongst the literature of the land ; and in the most worthless of all his poems, Walsh, an established authority, and whom Dryden pronounced the ablest critic of the age, found proofs of equality with Virgil.

The literary correspondence with these gentlemen is interesting as a model of what once passed for fine letter-writing. Every nerve was strained to outdo each other in carving all thoughts into a filigree work of rhetoric ; and the amœbean contest was like that between two village cocks

[1] Dr. Johnson said that all he could discover about Mr Cromwell was the fact of his going a-hunting in a tie-wig ; but Gay has added another fact to Dr. Johnson's, by calling him "honest *hatless* Cromwell with red breeches." This epithet has puzzled the commentators, but its import is obvious enough. Cromwell, as we learn from more than one person, was anxious to be considered a fine gentleman, and devoted to women. Now, it was long the custom in that age for such persons, when walking with ladies, to carry their hats in their hand. Louis XV used to ride by the side of Madame de Pompadour hat in hand.

from neighbouring farms endeavouring to overcrow each other. To us, in this age of purer and more masculine taste, the whole scene takes the ludicrous air of old and young fops dancing a minuet with each other, practising the most elaborate grimaces, sinkings and risings the most awful, bows the most overshadowing, until plain walking, running, or the motions of natural dancing, are thought too insipid for endurance. In this instance the taste had perhaps really been borrowed from France, though often enough we impute to France what is the native growth of all minds placed in similar circumstances. Madame de Sevigné's Letters were really models of grace. But Balzac, whose letters, however, are not without interest, had in some measure formed himself upon the truly magnificent rhetoric of Pliny and Seneca. Pope and his correspondents, meantime, degraded the dignity of rhetoric by applying it to trivial commonplaces of compliment; whereas Seneca applied it to the grandest themes which life or contemplation can supply. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, on first coming amongst the wits of the day, naturally adopted their style. She found this sort of *euphuism* established; and it was not for a very young woman to oppose it. But her masculine understanding and powerful good sense, shaken free, besides, from all local follies by travels and extensive commerce with the world, first threw off these glittering chains of affectation. Dean Swift, by the very constitution of his mind, plain, sinewy, nervous, and courting only the strength that allies itself with homeliness, was always indisposed to this mode of correspondence. And, finally, Pope himself, as his earlier friends died off, and his own understanding acquired strength, laid it aside altogether. One reason doubtless was that he found it too fatiguing; since in this way of letter-writing he was put to as much expense of wit in amusing an individual correspondent as would for an equal extent have sufficed to delight the whole world. A funambulist may harass his muscles and risk his neck on the tight-rope, but hardly to entertain his own family. Pope, however, had another reason for declining this showy system of fencing; and strange it is that he had not discovered this reason from the very first. As life advanced, it happened unavoidably that real business advanced. The care-

less condition of youth prompted no topics, or at least prescribed none, but such as were agreeable to the taste, and allowed of an ornamental colouring But, when downright business occurred, exchequer bills to be sold, meetings to be arranged, negotiations confided, difficulties to be explained, here and there by possibility a jest or two might be scattered, a witty allusion thrown in, or a sentiment interwoven ; but, for the main body of the case, it neither could receive any ornamental treatment, nor, if, by any effort of ingenuity, it *had*, could it look otherwise than silly and unreasonable :—

"Ornari res ipsa negat, contenta doceri."

Pope's idleness, therefore, on the one hand, concurring with good sense and the necessities of business on the other, drove him to quit his gay rhetoric in letter-writing. But there are passages surviving in his correspondence which indicate that, after all, had leisure and the coarse perplexities of life permitted it, he still looked with partiality upon his youthful style, and cherished it as a first love. But in this harsh world, as the course of true love, so that of rhetoric, never did run smooth; and thus it happened that, with a lingering farewell, he felt himself forced to bid it adieu. Strange that any man should think his own sincere and confidential overflowings of thought and feeling upon books, men, and public affairs, less valuable in a literary view than the legerdemain of throwing up bubbles into the air for the sake of watching their prismatic hues, like an Indian juggler with his cups and balls. We of this age, who have formed our notions of epistolary excellence from the chastity of Gray's, the brilliancy of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's during her later life, and the mingled good sense and fine feeling of Cowper's, value only those letters of Pope which he himself thought of inferior value. And even with regard to these we may say that there is a great mistake made : the best of those later letters between Pope and Swift, &c., are not in themselves at all superior to the letters of sensible and accomplished women, such as leave every town in the island by every post. Their chief interest is a derivative one. We are pleased with any letter, good or bad, which relates to men of such eminent talent ; and sometimes the subjects dis-

cussed have a separate interest for themselves. But, as to the quality of the discussion, apart from the person discussing and the thing discussed, so trivial is the value of these letters in a large proportion that we cannot but wonder at the preposterous value which was set upon them by the writers.[1] Pope especially ought not to have his ethereal works loaded by the mass of trivial prose which is usually attached to them.

This correspondence, meantime, with the wits of the time, though one mode by which, in the absence of reviews, the reputation of an author was spread, did not perhaps serve the interests of Pope so effectually as the poems which in this way he circulated in those classes of English society whose favour he chiefly courted. One of his friends, the truly kind and accomplished Sir William Trumbull, served him in that way, and perhaps in another eventually even more important. The library of Pope's father was composed exclusively of polemical divinity,—a proof, by the way, that he was not a blind convert to the Roman Catholic faith, or, if he was so originally, had reviewed the grounds of it, and adhered to it after strenuous study. In this dearth of books at his own home, and until he was able to influence his father in buying more extensively, Pope had benefited by the loans of his friends ; amongst whom it is probable that Sir William, as one of the best scholars of the whole, might assist him most. He certainly offered him the most touching compliment, as it was also the wisest and most paternal counsel, when he besought him, as one *goddess-born*, to quit the convivial society of deep-drinkers :

"Heu, fuge, nate dea, teque his, ait, eripe malis."

With these aids from friends of rank, and his way thus laid open to public favour, in the year 1709 Pope first came forward upon the stage of literature. The same year which terminated his legal minority introduced him to the public.

[1] It is strange indeed to find not only that Pope had so frequently kept rough copies of his own letters, and that he thought so well of them as to repeat the same letter to different persons,—as in the case of the two lovers killed by lightning, or even to two sisters, Martha and Therese Blount (who were sure to communicate their letters),—but that even Swift had retained copies of *his*.

Miscellanies in those days were almost periodical repositories of fugitive verse. Tonson happened at this time to be publishing one of some extent, the sixth volume of which offered a sort of ambush to the young aspirant of Windsor Forest, from which he might watch the public feeling. The volume was opened by Mr. Ambrose Philips, in the character of pastoral poet; and in the same character, but stationed at the end of the volume, and thus covered by his bucolic leader, as a soldier to the rear by the file in advance, appeared Pope; so that he might win a little public notice, without too much seeming to challenge it. This half-clandestine emersion upon the stage of authorship, and his furtive position, are both mentioned by Pope as accidents, but as accidents in which he rejoiced, and not improbably accidents which Tonson had arranged with a view to his satisfaction. It must appear strange that Pope at twenty-one should choose to come forward for the first time with a work composed at sixteen. A difference of five years at that stage of life is of more effect than of twenty at a later; and his own expanding judgment could hardly fail to inform him that his "Pastorals" were by far the worst of his works. In reality, let us not deny that, had Pope never written anything else, his name would not have been known as a name even of promise, but would probably have been redeemed from oblivion by some satirist or writer of a "Dunciad." Were a man to meet with such a nondescript monster as the following,—viz. "*Love out of Mount Ætna by a Whirlwind*,"—he would suppose himself reading the "Racing Calendar." Yet this hybrid creature is one of the many zoological monsters to whom the "Pastorals" introduce us:—

> "I know thee, Love! on foreign mountains bred,
> Wolves gave thee suck, and savage tigers fed.
> Thou wert from Ætna's burning entrails torn,
> Got by fierce whirlwinds, and in thunder born."

But the very names "Damon" and "Strephon," "Phillis" and "Delia," are rank with childishness. Arcadian life is at the best a feeble conception, and rests upon the false principle of crowding together all the luscious sweets of rural life, undignified by the danger which attends pastoral life in our climate, and unrelieved by shades, either moral or physical.

And the Arcadia of Pope's age was the spurious Arcadia of the opera theatre, and, what is worse, of the French opera.

The hostilities which followed between these rival wooers of the pastoral muse are well known. Pope, irritated at what he conceived the partiality shown to Philips in the "Guardian," pursued the review ironically; and, whilst affecting to load his antagonist with praises, draws into pointed relief some of his most flagrant faults. The result, however, we cannot believe. That all the wits, except Addison, were duped by the irony, is quite impossible. Could any man of sense mistake for praise the remark that Philips had imitated "*every* line of Strada"; that he had introduced wolves into England, and proved himself the first of gardeners by making his flowers "blow all in the same season"? Or, suppose those passages unnoticed, could the broad sneer escape him where Pope taxes the other writer (viz. himself) with having deviated "into downright poetry"? or the outrageous ridicule of Philips's style, as setting up for the ideal type of the pastoral style the quotation from Gay, beginning,

> "Rager, go vetch tha kee, or else tha zun
> Will quite bego before ch' 'avs half a don!"

Philips is said to have resented this treatment by threats of personal chastisement to Pope, and even hanging up a rod at Button's Coffee-house. We may be certain that Philips never disgraced himself by such ignoble conduct. If the public, indeed, were universally duped by the paper, what motive had Philips for resentment? Or, in any case, what plea had he for attacking Pope, who had not come forward as the author of the Essay? But, from Pope's confidential account of the matter, we know that Philips saw him daily, and never offered him "any indecorum"; though, for some cause or other, Pope pursued Philips with virulence through life.

In the year 1711 Pope published his "Essay on Criticism," which some people have very unreasonably fancied his best performance; and in the same year his "Rape of the Lock," the most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal literature offers. It wanted, however, as yet, the principle of its vitality, in wanting the machinery of

sylphs and gnomes, with which addition it was first published in 1714.

In the year 1712 Pope appeared again before the public as the author of the "Temple of Fame" and the "Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady." Much speculation has arisen on the question concerning the name of this lady, and the more interesting question concerning the nature of the persecutions and misfortunes which she suffered. Pope appears purposely to decline answering the questions of his friends upon that point; at least the questions have reached us, and the answers have not. Joseph Warton supposed himself to have ascertained four facts about her: that her name was Wainsbury; that she was deformed in person; that she retired into a convent from some circumstances connected with an attachment to a young man of inferior rank; and that she killed herself, not by a sword, as the poet insinuates, but by a halter. As to the latter statement, it may very possibly be true; such a change would be a very slight exercise of the poet's privileges. As to the rest, there are scarcely grounds enough for an opinion. Pope certainly speaks of her under the name of Mrs. (*i.e.* Miss) W——, which at least argues a poetical exaggeration in describing her as a being "that once had *titles*, honour, wealth, and fame"; and he may as much have exaggerated her pretensions to beauty. It is indeed noticeable that he speaks simply of her *decent* limbs,—which, in any English use of the word, does not imply much enthusiasm of praise. She appears to have been the niece of a Lady A——; and Mr. Craggs, afterwards secretary of state, wrote to Lady A—— on her behalf, and otherwise took an interest in her fate. As to her being a relative of the Duke of Buckingham's, that rests upon a mere conjectural interpretation applied to a letter of that nobleman's. But all things about this unhappy lady are as yet enveloped in mystery. And not the least part of the mystery is a letter of Pope's to a Mr. C——, bearing date 1732,—that is, just twenty years after the publication of the poem,—in which Pope, in a manly tone, justifies himself for his estrangement, and presses against his unknown correspondent the very blame which he had applied generally to the kinsman of the poor victim in 1712. Now, unless there

is some mistake in the date, how are we to explain this gentleman's long lethargy, and his sudden sensibility to Pope's anathema, with which the world had resounded for twenty years?

Pope had now established his reputation with the public as the legitimate successor and heir to the poetical supremacy of Dryden. His "Rape of the Lock" was unrivalled in ancient or modern literature, and the time had now arrived when, instead of seeking to extend his fame, he might count upon a pretty general support in applying what he had already established to the promotion of his own interest. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1713, he formed a final resolution of undertaking a new translation of the "Iliad." It must be observed that already in 1709, concurrently with his Pastorals, he had published specimens of such a translation; and these had been communicated to his friends some time before. In particular, Sir William Trumbull, on the 9th of April 1708, urged upon Pope a complete translation of both "Iliad" and "Odyssey." Defective skill in the Greek language, exaggeration of the difficulties, and the timidity of a writer as yet unknown, and not quite twenty years old, restrained Pope for five years and more. What he had practised as a sort of *bravura*, for a single effort of display, he recoiled from as a daily task to be pursued through much toil and a considerable section of his life. However, he dallied with the purpose, starting difficulties in the temper of one who wishes to hear them undervalued; until at length Sir Richard Steele determined him to the undertaking, — a fact overlooked by the biographers, but which is ascertained by Ayre's account of that interview between Pope and Addison, probably in 1716, which sealed the rupture between them. In the autumn of 1713 he made his design known amongst his friends. Accordingly, on the 21st of October, we have Lord Lansdowne's letter, expressing his great pleasure at the communication; on the 26th we have Addison's letter encouraging him to the task; and in November of the same year occurs the amusing scene so graphically described by Bishop Kennet, when Dean Swift presided in the conversation, and amongst other indications of his conscious authority "instructed a young nobleman

that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope, who had *begun* a translation of Homer into English verse, for which he must have them all subscribe; for," says he, "*the author shall not begin to print until I have a thousand guineas for him.*"

If this were the extent of what Swift anticipated from the work, he fell miserably below the result. But perhaps he spoke only of a cautionary *arrha* or earnest. As this was unquestionably the greatest literary labour, as to profit, ever executed, not excepting the most lucrative of Sir Walter Scott's, if due allowance be made for the altered value of money, and if we consider the "Odyssey" as forming part of the labour, it may be right to state the particulars of Pope's contract with Lintot.

The number of subscribers to the "Iliad" was 575, and the number of copies subscribed for was 654. The work was to be printed in six quarto volumes, and the subscription was a guinea a volume. Consequently by the subscription Pope obtained six times 654 guineas, or £4218 : 6s. (for the guinea then passed for 21s. 6d.); and for the copyright of each volume Lintot offered £200, consequently £1200 for the whole six; so that from the "Iliad" the profit exactly amounted to £5310 : 16s. Of the "Odyssey" 574 copies were subscribed for. It was to be printed in five quarto volumes, and the subscription was a guinea a volume. Consequently by the subscription Pope obtained five times 574 guineas, or £3085 : 5s.; and for the copyright Lintot offered £600. The total sum received therefore by Pope on account of the "Odyssey" was £3685 : 6s. But in this instance he had two coadjutors, Broome and Fenton: between them they translated twelve books, leaving twelve to Pope. The notes also were compiled by Broome; but the postscript to the notes was written by Pope. Fenton received £300, Broome £500. Such, at least, is Warton's account, and more probable than that of Ruffhead; who not only varies the proportions, but increases the whole sum given to the assistants by £100. Thus far we had followed the guidance of mere probabilities, as they lie upon the face of the transaction. But we have since detected a written statement of Pope's, unaccountably overlooked by the biographers, and serving of itself to show how negligently they have read the works of

their illustrious subject. The statement is entitled to the fullest attention and confidence, not being a hasty or casual notice of the transaction, but pointedly shaped to meet a calumnious rumour against Pope in his character of paymaster; as if he, who had found so much liberality from publishers in his own person, were niggardly or unjust as soon as he assumed those relations to others. Broome, it was alleged, had expressed himself dissatisfied with Pope's remuneration. Perhaps he had; for he would be likely to frame his estimate for his own services from the scale of Pope's reputed gains; and those gains would, at any rate, be enormously exaggerated, as uniformly happens where there is a basis of the marvellous to begin with. And, secondly, it would be natural enough to assume the previous result from the "Iliad" as a fair standard for computation; but in this, as we know, all parties found themselves disappointed; and Broome had the less right to murmur at this, since the arrangement with himself as chief journeyman in the job was one main cause of the disappointment. There was also another reason why Broome should be less satisfied than Fenton. Verse for verse, any one thousand lines of a translation so purely mechanical might stand against any other thousand; and so far the equation of claims was easy. A book-keeper, with a pen behind his ear, and Cocker's "Golden Rule" open before him, could do full justice to Mr. Broome *as a poet* every Saturday night. But Broome had a separate account-current for pure prose against Pope. One he had in conjunction with Fenton for verses delivered on the premises at so much per hundred, on which there could be no demur, except as to the allowance for tare and tret as a discount in favour of Pope. But the prose account, the account for notes, requiring very various degrees of reading and research, allowed of no such easy equation. *There* it was, we conceive, that Broome's discontent arose. Pope, however, declares that he had given him £500, thus confirming the proportions of Warton against Ruffhead (that is, in effect, Warburton), and some other advantages which were not in money, nor deductions at all from his own money profits, but which may have been worth so much money to Broome as to give some colourable truth to Ruffhead's allegation of an additional £100

In direct money, it remains certain that Fenton had three and Broome five hundred pounds.

It follows, therefore, that for the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" jointly he received a sum of £8996 : 1s., and paid for assistance £800 ; which leaves to himself a clear sum of £8196 : 1s. And, in fact, his profits ought to be calculated without deduction, since it was his own choice, from indolence, to purchase assistance.

The "Iliad" was commenced about October 1713. In the summer of the following year he was so far advanced as to begin making arrangements with Lintot for the printing; and the first two books, in manuscript, were put into the hands of Lord Halifax. In June 1715, between the 10th and 28th, the subscribers received their copies of the first volume; and in July Lintot began to publish that volume generally. Some readers will inquire, Who paid for the printing and paper, &c.? All this expense fell upon Lintot, for whom Pope was superfluously anxious. The sagacious bookseller understood what he was about; and, when a pirated edition was published in Holland, he counteracted the injury by printing a cheap edition, of which 7500 copies were sold in a few weeks,—an extraordinary proof of the extended interest in literature. The second, third, and fourth volumes of the "Iliad," each containing, like the first, four books, were published successively in 1716, 1717, 1718; and in 1720 Pope completed the work by publishing the fifth volume, containing five books, and the sixth, containing the last three, with the requisite supplementary apparatus.

The "Odyssey" was commenced in 1723 (not 1722, as Mr. Roscoe virtually asserts at p. 259 [1]), and the publication of it was finished in 1725. The sale, however, was much inferior to that of the "Iliad"; for which more reasons than one might be assigned. But there can be no doubt that Pope himself depreciated the work by his undignified arrangements for working by subordinate hands. Such a process may answer in sculpture, because there a quantity of rough-hewing occurs, which can no more be improved by committing it to a Phidias than a common shop-bill could be improved in its arithmetic by Sir Isaac Newton. But in literature such

[1] See footnote, *ante*, p. 241.—M.

arrangements are degrading; and, above all, in a work which was but too much exposed already to the presumption of being a mere effort of mechanic skill,—or (as Curll said to the House of Lords) "*a knack*,"—it was deliberately helping forward that idea to let off parts of the labour. Only think of Milton letting off by contract to the lowest offer, and to be delivered by such a day (for which good security to be found), six books of "Paradise Lost." It is true, the great dramatic authors were often *collaborateurs*, but their case was essentially different. The loss, however, fell not upon Pope, but upon Lintot; who, on this occasion, was out of temper, and talked rather broadly of prosecution. But that was out of the question. Pope had acted indiscreetly, but nothing could be alleged against his honour; for he had expressly warned the public that he did not, as in the other case, profess *to translate*, but to *undertake*[1] *a translation* of the "Odyssey." Lintot, however, was no loser absolutely, though he might be so in relation to his expectations; on the contrary, he grew rich, bought land, and became sheriff of the county in which his estates lay.

We have pursued the Homeric labours uninterruptedly from their commencement in 1713 till their final termination in 1725, a period of twelve years or nearly; because this was the task to which Pope owed the dignity, if not the comforts, of his life, since it was this which enabled him to decline a pension from all administrations, and even from his friend Craggs, the secretary, to decline the express offer of £300 per annum. Indeed, Pope is always proud to own his obligations to Homer. In the interval, however, between the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," Pope listened to proposals made by Jacob Tonson that he should revise an edition of Shakspere. For this, which was in fact the first attempt at establishing the text of the mighty poet, Pope obtained but little money, and still less reputation. He received, according to tradition, only £217 : 12s. for his trouble of collation,

[1] The word *undertake* had not yet lost the meaning of Shakspere's age, in which it was understood to describe those cases where, the labour being of a miscellaneous kind, some person in chief offered to overlook and conduct the whole, whether with or without personal labour. The modern *undertaker*, limited to the care of funerals, was then but one of numerous cases to which the term was applied.

which must have been considerable, and some other trifling editorial labour. And the opinion of all judges, from the first so unfavourable as to have depreciated the money value of the book enormously, perhaps from a prepossession of the public mind against the fitness of Pope for executing the dull labours of revision, has ever since pronounced this work the very worst edition in existence. For the edition we have little to plead; but for the editor it is but just to make three apologies. In the *first* place, he wrote a brilliant preface, which, although (like other works of the same class) too much occupied in displaying his own ability, and too often, for the sake of an effective antithesis, doing deep injustice to Shakspere, yet undoubtedly, as a whole, extended his fame, by giving the sanction and countersign of a great wit to the national admiration. *Secondly*, as Dr. Johnson admits, Pope's failure pointed out the right road to his successors. *Thirdly*, even in this failure it is but fair to say that in a graduated scale of merit, as distributed amongst the long succession of editors through that century, Pope holds a rank proportionable to his age. For the year 1720, he is no otherwise below Theobald, Hanmer, Capell, Warburton, or even Johnson, than as they are successively below each other, and all of them as to accuracy below Steevens, as he again was below Malone and Read.

The gains from Shakspere would hardly counterbalance the loss which Pope sustained this year from the South Sea bubble. One thing, by the way, is still unaccountably neglected by writers on this question: how it was that the great Mississippi bubble, during the Orleans regency in Paris, should have happened to coincide with that of London. If this were accident, how marvellous that the same insanity should possess the two great capitals of Christendom in the same year! If, again, it were not accident, but due to some common cause, why is not that cause explained? Pope to his nearest friends never stated the amount of his loss. The biographers report that at one time his stock was worth from twenty to thirty thousand pounds. But that is quite impossible. It is true that, as the stock rose at one time a thousand per cent, this would not imply on Pope's part an original purchase beyond twenty-five hundred pounds or thereabouts.

But Pope has furnished an argument against *that*, which we shall improve. He quotes more than once, as applicable to his own case, the old proverbial riddle of Hesiod, πλέον ἥμισυ παντός (*the half is more than the whole*). What did he mean by that? We understand it thus: that between the selling and buying the variations had been such as to sink his shares to one-half of the price they had once reached, but, even at that depreciation, to leave him richer on selling out than he had been at first. But the half of £25,000 would be a far larger sum than Pope could have ventured to risk upon a fund confessedly liable to daily fluctuation. £3000 would be the utmost he could risk; in which case the half of £25,000 would have left him so very much richer that he would have proclaimed his good fortune as an evidence of his skill and prudence. Yet, on the contrary, he wished his friends to understand at times that he had lost. But his friends forgot to ask one important question: Was the word *loss* to be understood in relation to the imaginary and nominal wealth which he once possessed, or in relation to the absolute sum invested in the South Sea fund? The truth is, Pope practised on this, as on other occasions, a little finessing; which is the chief foible in his character. His object was that, according to circumstances, he might vindicate his own freedom from the common mania in case his enemies should take that handle for attacking him, or might have it in his power to plead poverty, and to account for it, in case he should ever accept that pension which had been so often tendered but never sternly rejected.

In 1723 Pope lost one of his dearest friends, Bishop Atterbury, by banishment; a sentence most justly incurred, and mercifully mitigated by the hostile Whig Government. On the bishop's trial, a circumstance occurred to Pope which flagrantly corroborated his own belief in his natural disqualification for public life. He was summoned as an evidence on his friend's behalf. He had but a dozen words to say, simply explaining the general tenor of his lordship's behaviour at Bromley; and yet, under this trivial task, though supported by the enthusiasm of his friendship, he broke down. Lord Bolingbroke, returning from exile, met the bishop at the sea-side; upon which it was wittily remarked that they were "ex-

changed." Lord Bolingbroke supplied to Pope the place, or perhaps more than supplied the place, of the friend he had lost; for Bolingbroke was a freethinker, and so far more entertaining to Pope, even whilst partially dissenting, than Atterbury, whose clerical profession laid him under restraints of decorum, and latterly, there is reason to think, of conscience.

In 1725, on closing the "Odyssey," Pope announces his intention to Swift of quitting the labours of a translator, and thenceforwards applying himself to original composition. This resolution led to the "Essay on Man," which appeared soon afterwards; and, with the exception of two labours, which occupied Pope in the interval between 1726 and 1729, the rest of his life may properly be described as dedicated to the further extension of that Essay. The two works which he interposed were a collection of the fugitive papers, whether prose or verse, which he and Dean Swift had scattered amongst their friends at different periods of life. The avowed motive for this publication, and in fact the secret motive, as disclosed in Pope's confidential letters, was to make it impossible thenceforwards for piratical publishers like Curll. Both Pope and Swift dreaded the malice of Curll in case they should die before him. It was one of Curll's regular artifices to publish a heap of trash on the death of any eminent man, under the title of his "Remains"; and in allusion to that practice it was that Arbuthnot most wittily called Curll "one of the new terrors of death." By publishing *all*, Pope would have disarmed Curll beforehand; and *that* was in fact the purpose; and that plea only could be offered by two grave authors, one forty, the other sixty years old, for reprinting *jeux d'esprit* that never had any other apology than the youth of their authors. Yet, strange to say, after all, some were omitted; and the omission of one opened the door to Curll as well as that of a score. Let Curll have once inserted the narrow end of the wedge, he would soon have driven it home.

This "Miscellany," however, in three volumes (published in 1727, but afterwards increased by a fourth in 1732), though in itself a trifling work, had one vast consequence. It drew after it swarms of libels and lampoons, levelled

almost exclusively at Pope, although the cipher of the joint authors stood entwined upon the title-page. These libels in *their* turn produced a second re-action, and, by stimulating Pope to effectual anger, eventually drew forth, for the everlasting admiration of posterity, the very greatest of Pope's works,—a monument of satirical power the greatest which man has produced, not excepting the "MacFleckno" of Dryden,—namely, the immortal "Dunciad."

In October of the year 1727 this poem, in its original form, was completed. Many editions, not spurious altogether, nor surreptitious, but with some connivance, not yet explained, from Pope, were printed in Dublin and in London. But the first quarto and acknowledged edition was published in London early in "1728-9," as the editors choose to write it,—that is (without perplexing the reader) in 1729; on March 12 of which year it was presented by the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, to the king and queen at St. James's.

Like a hornet, who is said to leave his sting in the wound, and afterwards to languish away, Pope felt so greatly exhausted by the efforts connected with the "Dunciad" (which are far greater, in fact, than all his Homeric labours put together) that he prepared his friends to expect for the future only an indolent companion and a hermit. Events rapidly succeeded which tended to strengthen the impression he had conceived of his own decay, and certainly to increase his disgust with the world. In 1732 died his friend Atterbury; and on December the 7th of the same year Gay, the most unpretending of all the wits whom he knew, and the one with whom he had at one time been domesticated, expired, after an illness of three days,—which Dr. Arbuthnot declares to have been "the most precipitate" he ever knew. But in fact Gay had long been decaying from the ignoble vice of too much and too luxurious eating. Six months after this loss, which greatly affected Pope, came the last deadly wound which this life could inflict, in the death of his mother. She had for some time been in her dotage, and recognised no face but that of her son, so that her death was not unexpected; but that circumstance did not soften the blow of separation to Pope. She died on the 7th of June 1733, being then ninety-three

years old. Three days after, writing to Richardson the painter, for the purpose of urging him to come down and take her portrait before the coffin was closed, he says, "I thank God her death was as easy as her life was innocent; and, as it cost her not a groan nor even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity that it would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painting drew. Adieu! may you die as happily!" The funeral took place on the 11th. Pope then quitted the house, unable to support the silence of her chamber, and did not return for months, nor in fact ever reconciled himself to the sight of her vacant apartment.

Swift also he had virtually lost for ever. In April 1727 this unhappy man had visited Pope for the last time. During this visit occurred the death of George I. Great expectations arose from that event amongst the Tories, in which, of course, Swift shared. It was reckoned upon as a thing of course that Walpole would be dismissed. But this bright gleam of hope proved as treacherous as all before; and the anguish of this final disappointment perhaps it was which brought on a violent attack of Swift's constitutional malady. On the last of August he quitted Pope's house abruptly; concealed himself in London; and finally quitted it, as stealthily as he had before quitted Twickenham, for Ireland, never more to return. He left a most affectionate letter for Pope; but his affliction, and his gloomy anticipations of insanity, were too oppressive to allow of his seeking a personal interview.

Pope might now describe himself pretty nearly as *ultimus suorum;* and, if he would have friends in future, he must seek them, as he complains bitterly, almost amongst strangers and another generation. This sense of desolation may account for the acrimony which too much disfigures his writings henceforward. Between 1732 and 1740 he was chiefly engaged in satires, which uniformly speak a high moral tone in the midst of personal invective, or in poems directly philosophical, which almost as uniformly speak the bitter tone of satire in the midst of dispassionate ethics. His "Essay on Man" was but one link in a general course which he had projected of moral philosophy, here and there pursuing his themes into the fields of metaphysics, but no farther in

either field of morals or metaphysics than he could make compatible with a poetical treatment. These works, however, naturally entangled him in feuds of various complexions with people of very various pretensions; and, to admirers of Pope so fervent as we profess ourselves, it is painful to acknowledge that the dignity of his latter years, and the becoming tranquillity of increasing age, are sadly disturbed by the petulance and the tone of irritation which, alike to those in the wrong and in the right, inevitably besiege all personal disputes. He was agitated besides by a piratical publication of his correspondence. This emanated of course from the den of Curll, the universal robber and "*blatant beast*" of those days; and, besides the injury offered to his feelings by exposing some youthful sallies which he wished to have suppressed, it drew upon him a far more disgraceful imputation, most assuredly unfounded, but accredited by Dr. Johnson, and consequently in full currency to this day, of having acted collusively with Curll, or at least through Curll, for the publication of what he wished the world to see, but could not else have devised any decent pretext for exhibiting.

The disturbance of his mind on this occasion led to a circular request, dispersed amongst his friends, that they would return his letters. All complied except Swift. He only delayed, and in fact shuffled. But it is easy to read in his evasions,—and Pope, in spite of his vexation, read the same tale: viz.,—that, in consequence of his recurring attacks and increasing misery, he was himself the victim of artifices amongst those who surrounded him. What Pope apprehended happened. The letters were all published in Dublin and in London, the originals being then only returned when they had done their work of exposure.

Such a tenor of life, so constantly fretted by petty wrongs or by leaden insults, to which only the celebrity of their object lent force or wings, allowed little opportunity to Pope for recalling his powers from angry themes, and converging them upon others of more catholic philosophy. To the last he continued to conceal vipers beneath his flowers; or rather, speaking proportionately to the case, he continued to sheath amongst the gleaming but innocuous lightnings of

his departing splendours the thunderbolts which blasted for ever. His last appearance was his greatest. In 1742 he published the fourth book of the "Dunciad"; to which it has with much reason been objected that it stands in no obvious relation to the other three, but which, taken as a separate whole, is by far the most brilliant and the weightiest of his works. Pope was aware of the *hiatus* between this last book and the rest,—on which account he sometimes called it the "greater Dunciad"; and it would have been easy for him, with a shallow Warburtonian ingenuity, to invent links that might have satisfied a mere *verbal* sense of connexion. But he disdained this puerile expedient. The fact was, and could not be disguised from any penetrating eye, that the poem was not a pursuit of the former subjects; it had arisen spontaneously at various times, by looking at the same general theme of dulness (which, in Pope's sense, includes all aberrations of the intellect, nay, even any defective equilibrium amongst the faculties) under a different angle of observation, and from a different centre. In this closing book, not only bad authors, as in the other three, but all abuses of science or antiquarian knowledge, or connoisseurship in the arts, are attacked: virtuosi, medalists, butterfly-hunters, florists, erring metaphysicians, &c., are all pierced through and through as with the shafts of Apollo. But the imperfect plan of the work as to its internal economy, no less than its exterior relations, is evident in many places; and in particular the whole catastrophe of the poem, if it can be so called, is linked to the rest by a most insufficient incident. To give a closing grandeur to his work, Pope had conceived the idea of representing the earth as lying universally under the incubation of one mighty spirit of dulness; a sort of millennium, as we may call it, for ignorance, error, and stupidity. This would take leave of the reader with effect; but how was it to be introduced? at what era? under what exciting cause? As to the era, Pope could not settle that; unless it were a *future* era, the description of it could not be delivered as a prophecy; and, not being prophetic, it would want much of its grandeur. Yet, *as* a part of futurity, how is it connected with our present times? Do they and their pursuits lead to it as a possibility, or as a contingency upon

certain habits which we have it in our power to eradicate (in which case this vision of dulness has a *practical* warning); or is it a mere necessity, one amongst the many changes attached to the cycles of human destiny, or which chance brings round with the revolutions of its wheel? All this Pope could not determine; but the exciting cause he *has* determined, and it is preposterously below the effect. The Goddess of Dulness yawns; and her yawn,—which, after all, should rather express the fact and state of universal dulness than its cause,—produces a change over all nations tantamount to a long eclipse. Meantime, with all its defects of plan, the poem, as to execution, is superior to all which Pope has done; the composition is much superior to that of the "Essay on Man," and more profoundly poetic: the parodies drawn from Milton, as also in the former books, have a beauty and effect which cannot be expressed; and, if a young lady wished to cull for her album a passage from all Pope's writings which, without a trace of irritation or acrimony, should yet present an exquisite gem of independent beauty, she could not find another passage equal to the little story of the florist and the butterfly-hunter. They plead their cause separately before the throne of Dulness, the florist telling how he had reared a superb carnation, which, in honour of the queen, he called Caroline, when his enemy, pursuing a butterfly which settled on the carnation, in securing his own object, had destroyed that of the plaintiff. The defendant replies with equal beauty; and it may certainly be affirmed that, for brilliancy of colouring and the art of poetical narration, the tale is not surpassed by any in the language.

This was the last effort of Pope worthy of separate notice. He was now decaying rapidly, and sensible of his own decay. His complaint was a dropsy of the chest, and he knew it to be incurable. Under these circumstances his behaviour was admirably philosophical. He employed himself in revising and burnishing all his later works, as those upon which he wisely relied for his reputation with future generations. In this task he was assisted by Dr. Warburton, a new literary friend, who had introduced himself to the favourable notice of Pope about four years before, by a de-

fence of the "Essay on Man," which Crousaz had attacked, but in general indirectly and ineffectually, by attacking it through the blunders of a very faulty translation.[1] This poem, however, still labours, to religious readers, under two capital defects. If man, according to Pope, is now so admirably placed in the universal system of things that evil only could result from any change, then it seems to follow either that a fall of man is inadmissible, or at least that, by placing him in his true centre, it had been a blessing universally. The other objection lies in this, that, if all is right already, and in this earthly station, then one argument for a future state, as the scene in which evil is to be redressed, seems weakened or undermined.

As the weakness of Pope increased, his nearest friends, Lord Bolingbroke and a few others, gathered around him. The last scenes were passed almost with ease and tranquillity. He dined in company two days before he died; and on the very day preceding his death he took an airing on Blackheath. A few mornings before he died, he was found very early in his library writing on the immortality of the soul. This was an effort of delirium; and he suffered otherwise from this affection of the brain, and from inability to think in his closing hours. But his humanity and goodness, it was remarked, had survived his intellectual faculties. He died on the 30th of May 1744, and so quietly that the attendants could not distinguish the exact moment of his dissolution.

We had prepared an account of Pope's quarrels, in which we had shown that, generally, he was not the aggressor, and often was atrociously ill-used before he retorted. This service to Pope's memory we had judged important, because it is upon these quarrels chiefly that the erroneous opinion has built itself of Pope's fretfulness and irritability. And this unamiable feature of his nature, together with a proneness to petty manœuvring, are the main foibles that malice has been able to charge upon Pope's moral character. Yet,

[1] J. Pierre de Crousaz, a Swiss divine, had attacked Pope's *Essay on Man* as irreligious in principle; and Warburton had replied to this attack in *A Vindication of Mr. Pope's Essay on Man*, published in 1739.—M.

with no better foundation for their malignity than these doubtful propensities,—of which the first perhaps was a constitutional defect, a defect of his temperament rather than his will, and the second has been much exaggerated,—many writers have taken upon themselves to treat Pope as a man if not absolutely unprincipled, and without moral sensibility, yet as mean, little-minded, indirect, splenetic, vindictive, and morose. Now the difference between ourselves and these writers is fundamental. They fancy that in Pope's character a basis of ignoble qualities was here and there slightly relieved by a few shining spots; we, on the contrary, believe that in Pope lay a disposition radically noble and generous, clouded and overshadowed by superficial foibles: or, to adopt the distinction of Shakspere, they see nothing but "dust a little gilt," and we "gold a little dusted." A very rapid glance we will throw over the general outline of his character.

As a friend, it is noticed emphatically by Martha Blount and other contemporaries who must have had the best means of judging, that no man was so warm-hearted, or so much sacrificed himself for others, as Pope; and in fact many of his quarrels grew out of this trait in his character. For once that he levelled his spear in his own quarrel, at least twice he did so on behalf of his insulted parents or his friends. Pope was also noticeable for the duration of his friendships[1]: some dropped him, but he never any, throughout his life. And let it be remembered that amongst Pope's

[1] We may illustrate this feature in the behaviour of Pope to Savage. When all else forsook him, when all beside pleaded the insults of Savage for withdrawing their subscriptions, Pope sent his in advance. And, when Savage had insulted *him* also, arrogantly commanding him never "to presume to interfere or meddle in his affairs," dignity and self-respect made Pope obedient to these orders, except when there was an occasion of serving Savage. On his second visit to Bristol (when he returned from Glamorganshire), Savage had been thrown into the jail of the city. One person only interested himself for this hopeless profligate, and was causing an inquiry to be made about his debts at the time Savage died. So much Dr. Johnson admits; but he *forgets* to mention the name of this long-suffering friend. *It was Pope.* Meantime, let us not be supposed to believe the lying legend of Savage: he was doubtless no son of Lady Macclesfield's, but an impostor, who would now be sent to the treadmill.

friends were the men of most eminent talents in those days; so that envy at least, or jealousy of rival power, was assuredly no foible of his. In that respect how different from Addison, whose petty manœuvring against Pope proceeded entirely from malignant jealousy. That Addison was more in the wrong even than has generally been supposed, and Pope more thoroughly innocent as well as more generous, we have the means, at a proper opportunity, of showing decisively. As a son, we need not insist on Pope's pre-eminent goodness. Dean Swift, who had lived for months together at Twickenham, declares that he had not only never witnessed, but had never heard of, anything like it. As a Christian, Pope appears in a truly estimable light. He found himself a Roman Catholic by accident of birth; so was his mother; but his father was so upon personal conviction and conversion,—yet not without extensive study of the questions at issue. It would have laid open the road to preferment, and preferment was otherwise abundantly before him, if Pope would have gone over to the Protestant faith. And in his conscience he found no obstacle to that change; he was a philosophical Christian, intolerant of nothing but intolerance, a bigot only against bigots. But he remained true to his baptismal profession, partly on a general principle of honour in adhering to a distressed and dishonoured party, but chiefly out of reverence and affection to his mother. In his relation to women Pope was amiable and gentlemanly, and accordingly was the object of affectionate regard and admiration to many of the most accomplished in that sex. This we mention especially, because we would wish to express our full assent to the manly scorn with which Mr. Roscoe repels the libellous insinuations against Pope and Miss Martha Blount. A more innocent connexion we do not believe ever existed. As an author, Warburton has recorded that no man ever displayed more candour or more docility to criticisms offered in a friendly spirit. Finally, we sum up all in saying that Pope retained to the last a true and diffusive benignity; that this was the quality which survived all others, notwithstanding the bitter trial which his benignity must have stood through life, and the excitement to a spiteful reaction of feeling which was continually pressed upon

him by the scorn and insult which his deformity drew upon him from the unworthy.

But the moral character of Pope is of secondary interest: we are concerned with it only as connected with his great intellectual power. There are three errors which seem current upon this subject: *First*, that Pope drew his impulses from French literature; *secondly*, that he was a poet of inferior rank; *thirdly*, that his merit lies in superior "correctness." With respect to the first notion, it has prevailed by turns in every literature. One stage of society, in every nation, brings men of impassioned minds to the contemplation of manners, and of the social affections of man as exhibited in manners. With this propensity co-operates, no doubt, some degree of despondency when looking at the great models of the literature who have usually pre-occupied the grander passions, and displayed their movements in the earlier periods of literature. Now, it happens that the French, from an extraordinary defect in the higher qualities of passion, have attracted the notice of foreign nations chiefly to that field of their literature in which the taste and the unimpassioned understanding preside. But in all nations such literature is a natural growth of the mind, and would arise equally if the French literature had never existed. The wits of Queen Anne's reign, or even of Charles II's, were not French by their taste or their imitation. Butler and Dryden were surely not French; and of Milton we need not speak; as little was Pope French, either by his institution or by his models. Boileau he certainly admired too much; and, for the sake of a poor parallelism with a passage about Greece in Horace, he has falsified history in the most ludicrous manner, without a shadow of countenance from facts, in order to make out that we, like the Romans, received laws of taste from those whom we had conquered. But these are insulated cases and accidents, not to insist on his known and most profound admiration, often expressed, for Chaucer and Shakspere and Milton. Secondly, that Pope is to be classed as an inferior poet has arisen purely from a confusion between the departments of poetry which he cultivated and the merit of his culture. The first place must undoubtedly be given for ever,—it

cannot be refused,—to the impassioned movements of the tragic, and to the majestic movements of the epic, muse. We cannot alter the relations of things out of favour to an individual. But in his own department, whether higher or lower, that man is supreme who has not yet been surpassed; and such a man is Pope. As to the final notion, first started by Walsh, and propagated by Warton, it is the most absurd of all the three; it is not from superior correctness that Pope is esteemed more correct, but because the compass and sweep of his performances lie more within the range of ordinary judgments. Many questions that have been raised upon Milton or Shakspere, questions relating to so subtle a subject as the flux and reflux of human passion, lie far above the region of ordinary capacities; and the indeterminateness or even carelessness of the judgment is transferred by a common confusion to its objects. But, waiving this, let us ask what is meant by "correctness"? Correctness in what? In developing the thought? In connecting it, or effecting the transitions? In the use of words? In the grammar? In the metre? Under every one of these limitations of the idea, we maintain that Pope is *not* distinguished by correctness; nay, that, as compared with Shakspere, he is eminently incorrect. Produce us from any drama of Shakspere one of those leading passages that all men have by heart, and show us any eminent defect in the very sinews of the thought. It is impossible; defects there may be, but they will always be found irrelevant to the main central thought, or to its expression. Now, turn to Pope. The first striking passage which offers itself to our memory is the famous character of Addison, ending thus:—

> "Who would not laugh, if such a man there be,
> Who but must weep if Atticus were he?"

Why must we laugh? Because we find a grotesque assembly of noble and ignoble qualities. Very well; but why, then, must we weep? Because this assemblage is found actually existing in an eminent man of genius. Well, that is a good reason for weeping; we weep for the degradation of human nature. But then revolves the question, Why must we

laugh? Because, if the belonging to a man of genius were a sufficient reason for weeping, so much we know from the very first. The very first line says, "Peace to all such. But were there one whose fires *true genius kindles* and fair fame inspires." Thus falls to the ground the whole antithesis of this famous character. We are to change our mood from laughter to tears upon a sudden discovery that the character belonged to a man of genius; and this we had already known from the beginning. Match us this prodigious oversight in Shakspere.[1] Again, take the "Essay on Criticism": it is a collection of independent maxims, tied together into a fasciculus by the printer, but having no natural order or logical dependency: generally so vague as to mean nothing: like the general rules of justice, &c., in ethics, to which every man assents; but, when the question comes about any practical case, *is* it just? The opinions fly asunder far as the poles. And, what is remarkable, many of the rules are violated by no man so often as by Pope, and by Pope nowhere so often as in this very poem. As a single instance, he proscribes monosyllabic lines; and in no English poem of any pretensions are there so many lines of that class as in this. We have counted above a score, and the last line of all is monosyllabic.[2]

Not, therefore, for superior correctness, but for qualities the very same as belong to his most distinguished brethren, is Pope to be considered a great poet: for impassioned thinking, powerful description, pathetic reflection, brilliant narration. His characteristic difference is simply that he carried these powers into a different field, and moved chiefly amongst the social paths of men, and viewed their characters as operating through their manners. And our obligations to him arise chiefly on this ground,—that, having already, in the persons of earlier poets, carried off the palm in all the grander trials of intellectual strength, for the majesty of the epopee and the impassioned vehemence of the tragic drama, to Pope we owe it that we can now claim an equal pre-eminence in the sportive and aërial graces of the mock heroic and satiric muse; that in the "Dunciad"

[1] See note at the end of this paper.—M.
[2] "Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend."—M.

we possess a peculiar form of satire, in which (according to a plan unattempted by any other nation) we see alternately her festive smile and her gloomiest scowl ; that the grave good sense of the nation has here found its brightest mirror ; and, finally, that through Pope the cycle of our poetry is perfected and made orbicular,—that from that day we might claim the laurel equally, whether for dignity or grace.

APPENDED NOTES

POPE'S BIRTH-DAY.—Page 237.

Dr. Johnson, however, and Joseph Warton, for reasons not stated, have placed his birth on the 22d. To this statement, as opposed to that which comes from the personal friends of Pope, little attention is due. Ruffhead and Spence, upon such questions, must always be of higher authority than Johnson and Warton, and *a fortiori* than Bowles. But it ought not to be concealed, though hitherto unnoticed by any person, that some doubt after all remains whether *any* of the biographers is right. An anonymous writer, contemporary with Pope, and evidently familiar with his personal history, declares that he was born on the 8th of June ; and he connects it with an event that, having a public and a partisan interest (the birth of that Prince of Wales who was known twenty-seven years afterwards as the Pretender), would serve to check his own recollections, and give them a collateral voucher. It is true he wrote for an ill-natured purpose ; but no purpose whatever could have been promoted by falsifying this particular date. What is still more noticeable, however, Pope himself puts a most emphatic negative upon all these statements. In a pathetic letter to a friend, when his attention could not have been wandering, for he is expressly insisting upon a sentiment which will find an echo in many a human heart,—viz., that a birthday, though from habit usually celebrated as a festal day, too often is secretly a memorial of disappointment, and an anniversary of sorrowful meaning, —he speaks of the very day on which he is then writing as his own birthday ; and indeed what else could give any propriety to the passage ? Now the date of this letter is January 1, 1733. Surely Pope knew his own birthday better than those who have adopted a random rumour without investigation.

But, whilst we are upon this subject, we must caution the readers

of Pope against too much reliance upon the chronological accuracy of his editors. *All* are scandalously careless; and generally they are faithless. Many allusions are left unnoticed, which a very little research would have illustrated; many facts are omitted, even yet recoverable, which are essential to the just appreciation of Pope's satirical blows; and dates are constantly misstated. Mr. Roscoe is the most careful of Pope's editors; but even he is often wrong. For instance, he has taken the trouble to write a note upon Pope's humorous report to Lord Burlington of his Oxford journey on horseback with Lintot; and this note involves a sheer impossibility. The letter is undated, except as to the month; and Mr. Roscoe directs the reader to supply 1714 as the true date; which is a gross anachronism. For a ludicrous anecdote is there put into Lintot's mouth, representing some angry critic, who had been turning over Pope's *Homer* with frequent *pshaws*, as having been propitiated, by Mr. Lintot's dinner, into a gentler feeling towards Pope, and finally, by the mere effect of good cheer, without an effort on the publisher's part, as coming to a confession that what he ate and what he had been reading were equally excellent. But in the year 1714 *no part* of Pope's "Homer" was printed. June 1715 was the month in which even the subscribers first received the four earliest books of the "Iliad," and the public generally not until July. This we notice by way of specimen. In itself, or as an error of mere negligence, it would be of little importance; but it is a case to which Mr. Roscoe has expressly applied his own conjectural skill, and solicited the attention of his reader. We may judge, therefore, of his accuracy in other cases which he did not think worthy of examination.

There is another instance, presenting itself in every page, of ignorance concurring with laziness on the part of all Pope's editors, and with the effect not so properly of misleading as of perplexing the general reader. Until Lord Macclesfield's bill for altering the style, in the very middle of the eighteenth century, six years therefore after the death of Pope, there was a custom, arising from the collision between the civil and ecclesiastical year, of dating the whole period that lies between December 31st and March 25th (both days *exclusively*) as belonging indifferently to the past or the current year. This peculiarity had nothing to do with the old and new style, but was, we believe, redressed by the same Act of Parliament. Now, in Pope's time it was absolutely necessary that a man should use this double date, because else he was liable to be seriously misunderstood. For instance, it was then always said that Charles I had suffered on the 30th of January $164\frac{8}{9}$; and why? Because, had the historian fixed the date to what it really was, 1649, in that case all those (a very numerous class) who supposed the year 1649 to commence on Lady-day, or March 25, would have understood him to mean that this event happened in what we *now* call 1650, for not until 1650 was there any January which *they* would have acknowledged as belonging to 1649, since *they* added to the year 1648 all the days from January 1 to March 24. On the other hand, if he had said simply that

Charles suffered in 1648, he would have been truly understood by the class we have just mentioned; but by another class, who began the year from the 1st of January, he would have been understood to mean what we *now* mean by the year 1648. There would have been a sheer difference, not of one, as the reader might think at first sight, but of *two* entire years in the chronology of the two parties; which difference, and all possibility of doubt, is met and remedied by the fractional date $\frac{1648}{1649}$; for that date says in effect it was 1648 to you who do not open the new year till Ladyday; it was 1649 to you who open it from January 1. Thus much to explain the real sense of the case; and it follows from this explanation that no part of the year ever *can* have the fractional or double date except the interval from January 1 to March 24 inclusively. And hence arises a practical inference,—viz., that the very same reason, and no other, which formerly enjoined the use of the compound or fractional date,—viz, the prevention of a capital ambiguity or dilemma,—now enjoins its omission. For in our day, when the double opening of the year is abolished, what sense is there in perplexing a reader by using a fraction which offers him a choice without directing him how to choose. In fact, it is the *denominator* of the fraction, if one may so style the lower figure, which expresses to a modern eye the true year. Yet the editors of Pope, as well as many other writers, have confused their readers by this double date; and why? Simply because they were confused themselves. Many errors in literature of large extent have arisen from this confusion. Thus it was said properly enough in the contemporary accounts—for instance, in Lord Monmouth's *Memoirs*—that Queen Elizabeth died on the last day of the year 1602, for she died on the 24th of March; and by a careful writer this event would have been dated as March 24, $\frac{1602}{1603}$. But many writers, misled by the phrase above cited, have asserted that James I. was proclaimed on the 1st of January 1603. Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, again, has ruined the entire chronology of the life of Jeremy Taylor, and unconsciously vitiated the facts, by not understanding this fractional date. Mr. Roscoe even too often leaves his readers to collect the true year as they can: thus *e.g.*, at p. 500 of his Life, he quotes from Pope's letter to Warburton, in great vexation for the surreptitious publication of his letters in Ireland, under date of February 4, 174$\frac{0}{1}$. But why not have printed it intelligibly as 1741? Incidents there are in most men's lives which are susceptible of a totally different moral value according as they are dated in one year or another. That might be a kind and honourable liberality in 1740 which would be a fraud upon creditors in 1741. Exile to a distance of 10 miles from London in January 1744 might argue that a man was a turbulent citizen and suspected of treason; while the same exile in January 1745 would simply argue that, as a Papist, he had been included amongst his whole body in a general measure of precaution to meet the public dangers of that year. This explanation we have thought it right to make, both for its extensive application to *all* editions of Pope, and on account of the serious blunders which have arisen from the case when ill understood; and because, in a work upon

education, written jointly by Messrs. Lant Carpenter and Shephard, though generally men of ability and learning, this whole point is erroneously explained.

POPE'S REMOVAL FROM TWYFORD SCHOOL.—Page 242.

This, however, was not Twyford, according to an anonymous pamphleteer of the times, but a Catholic seminary in Devonshire Street,—that is, in the Bloomsbury district of London ; and the same author asserts that the scene of his disgrace, as indeed seems probable beforehand, was not the first but the last of his arenas as a schoolboy. Which indeed was first, and which last, is very unimportant; but with a view to another point, which is not without interest, namely, as to the motive of Pope for so bitter a lampoon as we must suppose it to have been, as well as with regard to the topics which he used to season it, this anonymous letter throws the only light which has been offered; and strange it is that no biographer of Pope should have hunted upon the traces indicated by him. Any solution of Pope's virulence, and of the master's bitter retaliation, even *as* a solution, is so far entitled to attention; apart from which the mere straight-forwardness of this man's story, and its minute circumstantiality, weigh greatly in its favour. To our thinking he unfolds the whole affair in the simple explanation, nowhere else to be found, that the master of the school, the mean avenger of a childish insult by a bestial punishment, was a Mr. Bromley, one of James II's Popish apostates ; whilst the particular statements which he makes with respect to himself and the young Duke of Norfolk of 1700, as two schoolfellows of Pope at that time and place, together with his voluntary promise to come forward in person and verify his account if it should happen to be challenged, are all, we repeat, so many presumptions in favour of his veracity. "Mr. Alexander Pope," says he, "before he had been "four months at this school, or was able to construe 'Tully's Offices,' "employed his muse in satirizing his master. It was a libel of at "least one hundred verses, which (a fellow-student having given in-"formation of it) was found in his pocket; and the young satirist "was soundly whipped, and kept a prisoner to his room for seven "days ; whereupon his father fetched him away, and I have been told "he never went to school more." This Bromley, it has been ascertained, was the son of a country gentleman in Worcestershire, and must have had considerable prospects at one time, since it appears that he had been a gentleman-commoner at Christ's Church, Oxford. There is an error in the punctuation of the letter we have just quoted which affects the sense in a way very important to the question before us. Bromley is described as "one of King James's converts in Oxford, some years *after* that prince's abdication" ; but, if this were really so, he must have been a conscientious convert. The latter clause should be connected with what follows :—"*Some years after that prince's abdication he kept a little seminary*" ; that is, when his mercenary views in quitting his religion were effectually defeated, when the Boyne

had sealed his despair, he humbled himself into a petty school-master. These facts are interesting, because they suggest at once the motive for the merciless punishment inflicted upon Pope. His own father was a Papist like Bromley, but a sincere and honest Papist, who had borne double taxes, legal stigmas, and public hatred for conscience' sake. His contempt was habitually pointed at those who tampered with religion for interested purposes. His son inherited these upright feelings. And we may easily guess what would be the bitter sting of any satire he would write on Bromley. Such a topic was too true to be forgiven, and too keenly barbed by Bromley's conscience. By the way, this writer, like ourselves, reads in this juvenile adventure a prefiguration of Pope's satirical destiny.

POPE AS A SCHOLAR.—Page 250.

Meantime, the felicities of this translation are at times perfectly astonishing; and it would be scarcely possible to express more nervously or amply the words,—

> " . . . . . *jurisque secundi*
> *Ambitus impatiens*, et summo dulcius unum
> Stare loco . . . . ."

than this child of fourteen has done in the following couplet, which, most judiciously, by reversing the two clauses, gains the power of fusing them into connexion:—

> "And impotent desire to reign alone,
> *That scorns the dull reversion of a throne.*"

But the passage for which, beyond all others, we must make room, is a series of eight lines, corresponding to six in the original, and this for two reasons:—First, because Dr. Joseph Warton has deliberately asserted that in our whole literature "we have scarcely eight more beautiful lines than these"; and, though few readers will subscribe to so sweeping a judgment, yet certainly these must be wonderful lines for a boy which could challenge such commendation from an experienced *polyhistor* of infinite reading. Secondly, because the lines contain a night-scene. Now, it must be well known to many readers that the famous night-scene in the "Iliad," so familiar to every school-boy, has been made the subject, for the last thirty years, of severe, and in many respects, of just criticisms. This description will therefore have a double interest by comparison; whilst, whatever may be thought of either taken separately for itself, considered as a translation, this which we now quote is as true to Statius as the other is undoubtedly faithless to Homer:—

> "*Jamque per emeriti surgens confinia Phœbi*
> *Titanis, late mundo subvecta silenti*
> *Rorifera gelidum tenuaverat aera biga.*
> *Jam pecudes volucresque tacent. jam somnus avaris*
> *Inserpit curis, pronusque per aera nutat,*
> *Grata laboratæ referens oblivia vitæ.*"
>
> Theb. i. 336 341.

"'Twas now the time when Phœbus yields to night,
And rising Cynthia shed her silver light;
Wide o'er the world in solemn pomp she drew
Her airy chariot hung with pearly dew.
All birds and beasts lie hushed. Sleep steals away
The wild desires of men and toils of day;
And brings, descending through the silent air,
A sweet forgetfulness of human care."

POPE'S RETORT UPON ADDISON.—Pages 279-280.

[The following, though not one of De Quincey's original notes to his *Encyclopædia Britannica* article, has its proper place here. It is a portion of a very short subsequent paper of his, in which, while giving other specimens of literary bulls or blunders, he recurs to what he maintains to be Pope's blunder in his famous lines on Addison, and repeats and expands his criticism of those lines in the text of the present article. The rest of the short paper is reserved for a fitter occasion; but all that relates to Pope is extracted here.—M.]

There is nothing extraordinary, or that could merit a special notice, in a simple case of oversight, or in a blunder, though emanating from the greatest of poets. But such a case challenges and forces our attention when we know that the particular passage in which it occurs was wrought and burnished with excessive pains, or (which in this case is also known) when that particular passage is pushed into singular prominence as having obtained a singular success. In no part of his poetic mission did Pope so fascinate the gaze of his contemporaries as in his functions of satirist; which functions, in his latter years, absorbed all other functions. And one reason, I believe, why it was that the interest about Pope decayed so rapidly after his death (an accident somewhere noticed by Wordsworth) must be sought in the fact that the most stinging of his personal allusions, by which he had given salt to his later writings, were continually losing their edge, and sometimes their intelligibility, as Pope's own contemporary generation was dying off. Pope alleges it as a palliation of his satiric malice that it had been forced from him in the way of retaliation; forgetting that such a plea wilfully abjures the grandest justification of a satirist, viz. the deliberate assumption of the character as something corresponding to the prophet's mission amongst the Hebrews. It is no longer the *facit indignatio versum*. Pope's satire, wherever it was most effective, was personal and vindictive, and upon that argument alone could not be philosophic. Foremost in the order of his fulminations stood, and yet stands, the bloody castigation by which, according to his own pretence, he warned and menaced (but by which, in simple truth, he executed judgment upon) his false friend, Addison. To say that this drew vast rounds of applause upon its author, and frightened its object into deep silence for the rest of his life, like the *Quos ego* of angry Neptune, sufficiently argues that the verses must have ploughed as deeply as the Russian knout. Vitriol could not scorch more fiercely. And yet the whole passage rests upon

a blunder; and the blunder is so broad and palpable that it implies instant forgetfulness both in the writer and the reader. The idea which furnishes the basis of the passage is this: that the conduct ascribed to Addison is in its own nature so despicable as to extort laughter by its primary impulse, but that this laughter changes into weeping when we come to understand that the person concerned in this delinquency is Addison. The change, the transfiguration, in our mood of contemplating the offence is charged upon the discovery which we are supposed to make as to the person of the offender; that which by its baseness had been simply comic when imputed to some corresponding author passes into a tragic *coup-de-théâtre* when it is suddenly traced back to a man of original genius. The whole, therefore, of this effect is made to depend upon the sudden scenical transition from a supposed petty criminal to one of high distinction. And, meantime, no such stage effect had been possible, since the knowledge that a man of genius was the offender had been what we started with from the beginning. "Our laughter is changed to tears," says Pope, "as soon as we discover that the base act had a noble author." And, behold! the initial feature in the whole description of the case is, that the libeller was one whom "true genius fired":

> "Peace to all such! But, were there one whose mind
> True genius fires," etc

Before the offence is described, the perpetrator is already characterised as a man of genius: and, *in spite of that knowledge*, we laugh. But suddenly our mood changes, and we weep. But why? I beseech you. Simply because we have ascertained the author to be a man of genius.

> "Who would not laugh, if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

The sole reason for weeping is something that we knew already before we began to laugh.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH[1]

THIS book accomplishes a retribution which the world has waited for through more than seventy years. Welcome at any rate by its purpose, it is trebly welcome by its execution, to all hearts that linger indulgently over the frailties of a national favourite, long systematically exaggerated,—to all hearts that brood indignantly over the genial powers of that favourite, too often maliciously undervalued.

A man of original genius, shown to us as revolving through the leisurely stages of a biographical memoir, lays open, to readers prepared for such revelations, two separate theatres of interest: one in his personal career; the other in his works and his intellectual development. Both unfold concurrently: and each borrows a secondary interest from the other: the life from the recollection of the works—the works from the joy and sorrow of the life. There have, indeed, been authors whose great creations, severely preconceived in a region of thought transcendent to all impulses of earth, would have been pretty nearly what they are under any possible changes in the dramatic arrangement of their lives. Happy or not happy, — gay or sad, — these authors would equally have fulfilled a mission too solemn

[1] First published in the *North British Review* for May 1848, and revised by De Quincey in 1857 for the collective edition of his works, with some verbal changes (*e.g.* "we" into "I," "our" into "my"). The book reviewed was "The Life and Adventures of Goldsmith: a Biography. In four books. By John Forster. London, 1848."

and too stern in its obligations to suffer any warping from chance, or to bend before the accidents of life, whether dressed in sunshine or in wintry gloom. But generally this is otherwise. Children of Paradise, like the Miltons of our planet, have the privilege of stars to "dwell apart." But the children of flesh, whose pulses beat too sympathetically with the agitations of mother-earth, cannot sequester themselves in that way. They walk in no such altitudes, but at elevations easily reached by ground-winds of humble calamity. And from that cup of sorrow which upon all lips is pressed in some proportion they must submit, by the very tenure on which they hold their gifts, to drink, if not more profoundly than others, yet more perilously as regards the fulfilment of their intellectual mission.

Amongst this household of children, too sympathetically linked to the trembling impulses of earth, stands forward conspicuously Oliver Goldsmith. And there is a belief current that he was conspicuous, not only in the sense of being constitutionally more flexible than others to the impressions of calamity, in case they had happened to occur, but also that he really met with more than his share of those afflictions. I am disposed to think that this was not so. My trust is that Goldsmith lived upon the whole a life which, though troubled, was one of average enjoyment. Unquestionably, when reading at midnight, in the middle watch of a century which *he* never reached by one whole generation, this record of one so guileless, so upright, or seeming to be otherwise only in the eyes of those who did not know his difficulties, nor could have understood them,—when recurring also to his admirable genius, to the sweet natural gaiety of his oftentimes pathetic humour, and to the varied accomplishments, from talent or erudition, by which he gave effect to endowments so fascinating,—one cannot but sorrow over the strife which he sustained, and over the wrong by which he suffered. A few natural tears fall from every eye at the rehearsal of so much contumely from fools, which he faced unresistingly as one bareheaded under a hailstorm[1]; and

[1] I do not allude chiefly to his experience in childhood, when he is reported to have been a general butt of ridicule for his ugliness and

worse to bear than the scorn of fools was the imperfect sympathy and jealous self-distrusting esteem which he received to the last from friends. Doubtless he suffered much wrong; but so, in one way or other, do most men: he suffered also this special wrong, that in his lifetime he never was fully appreciated by any one friend: something of a counter-movement ever mingled with praise for *him;* he never saw himself enthroned in the heart of any young and fervent admirer; and he was always overshadowed by men less deeply genial, though more showy than himself: but these things happen, and will happen for ever, to myriads amongst the benefactors of earth. Their names ascend in songs of thankful commemoration, yet seldom until the ears are deaf that would have thrilled to the music. And these were the heaviest of Goldsmith's afflictions: what are likely to be thought such—viz. the battles which he fought for his daily bread—I do not number amongst them. To struggle is not to suffer. Heaven grants to few of us a life of untroubled prosperity, and grants it least of all to its favourites. Charles I. carried, as it was thought by a keen Italian judge of physiognomy, a predestination to misery written in his features. And it is probable that, if any Cornelius Agrippa had then been living, to show him in early life the strife, the bloodshed, the triumphs of enemies, the treacheries of friends, the separation for ever from the familiar faces of his hearth, which darkened the years from 1642 to 1649, Charles would have said, "Prophet of woe! if I bear to live through this vista of seven years, it is because at the further end of it thou showest me the consolation of a scaffold." And yet my own belief is that, in the midst of its deadly agitations and its torments of suspense, probably enough by the energies of hope, or even of anxiety which exalted it, that period of bitter conflict was found by the king a more ennobling life than he *would* have found in the torpor of a prosperity too profound. To be cloyed perpetu-

his supposed stupidity; since, as regarded the latter reproach, he could not have suffered very long, having already at a childish age vindicated his intellectual place by the verses which opened to him an academic destination. I allude to his mature life, and the supercilious condescension with which even his reputed friends doled out their praises to *him.*

ally is a worse fate than sometimes to stand within the vestibule of starvation; and we need go no further than the confidential letters of the court ladies in this and other countries to satisfy ourselves how much worse in its effects upon happiness than any condition of alarm and peril is the lethargic repose of luxury too monotonous, and of security too absolute. If, therefore, Goldsmith's life *had* been one of continual struggle, it would not follow that it had therefore sunk below the standard of ordinary happiness. But the life-struggle of Goldsmith, though severe enough (after all allowances) to challenge a feeling of tender compassion, was not in such a degree severe as has been represented.[1] He enjoyed two great immunities from suffering that have been much overlooked; and *such* immunities that, in our opinion, four in five of all the people ever connected with Goldsmith's works, as publishers, printers, compositors (that is, men taken at random), have very probably suffered more, upon the whole, than he. The immunities were these:—1st, from any *bodily* taint of low spirits. He had a constitutional gaiety of heart, an elastic hilarity, and, as he himself expresses it, "a knack of hoping"—which knack could not be bought with Ormus and with Ind, nor hired for a day with the peacock-throne of Delhi. How easy was it to bear the brutal affront of being to his face described as "*Doctor minor*," when one hour or less would dismiss the *Doctor major*, so invidiously contradistinguished from himself, to a struggle with scrofulous melancholy; whilst *he*, if returning to solitude and a garret, was returning also to habitual cheerfulness. *There* lay one immunity, beyond all price, from a mode of strife to which others, by a large majority, are doomed,—strife with bodily wretchedness. Another immunity he had of almost equal value, and yet almost equally forgotten by its biographers—viz. from the responsibilities of a family. Wife and children he had not. They it is that, being a man's chief blessings, create also for him

[1] I point this remark not at Mr. Forster; who, upon the whole, shares my opinion as to the tolerable comfort of Goldsmith's life. He speaks, indeed, elsewhere of Goldsmith's depressions; but the question still remains—were they of frequent recurrence, and had they any constitutional root or lodgment? I am inclined to say *no* in both cases.

the deadliest of his anxieties, that stuff his pillow with thorns, that surround his daily path with snares. Suppose the case of a man who has helpless dependents of this class upon himself summoned to face some sudden failure of his resources: how shattering to the power of exertion, and, above all, of exertion by an organ so delicate as the creative intellect, dealing with subjects so coy as those of imaginative sensibility, to know that instant ruin attends his failure. Success in such paths of literature might at the best be doubtful; but success is impossible, with any powers whatever, unless in a genial state of those powers; and this geniality is to be sustained, in the case supposed, whilst the eyes are fixed upon the most frightful of abysses yawning beneath his feet. He is to win his inspiration for poetry or romance from the prelusive cries of infants clamouring for daily bread. Now, on the other hand, in the case of an extremity equally sudden alighting on the head of a man in Goldsmith's position, having no burden to support but the trivial one of his own personal needs, the resources are endless for gaining time enough to look around. Suppose him ejected from his lodgings: let him walk into the country, with a pencil and a sheet of paper; there, sitting under a hay-stack for one morning, he may produce what will pay his expenses for a week: a day's labour will carry the sustenance of ten days. Poor may be the trade of authorship, but it is as good as that of a slave in Brazil, whose one hour's work will defray the twenty-four hours' living. As a reader, or corrector of proofs, any decent Latin and French scholar (like Goldsmith) would always have enjoyed a preference, I presume, at any eminent printing-office. This again, would have given him time for looking round or he might perhaps have obtained the same advantage for deliberation from some confidential friend's hospitality. In short Goldsmith enjoyed the two privileges — the one subjective, the other objective—which, when uniting in the same man, would prove more than a match for all difficulties that *could* arise in a literary career to him who was at once a man of genius so popular, of talents so versatile, of reading so various, and of opportunities so large for still more extended reading. The subjective privilege lay in his buoyancy of animal

spirits; the objective in his freedom from responsibilities. Goldsmith wanted very little more than Diogenes: now, Diogenes *could* only have been robbed of his tub[1]: which, perhaps, was about as big as most of poor Goldsmith's sitting-rooms, and far better ventilated. So that the liability of these two men, cynic and non-cynic, to the kicks of fortune was pretty much on a par; whilst Goldsmith had the advantage of a better temper for bearing them, though certainly Diogenes had the better climate for soothing his temper.

But it may be imagined that, if Goldsmith were thus fortunately equipped for authorship, on the other hand, the position of literature, as a money-making resource, was in Goldsmith's days less advantageous than ours. We are not of that opinion; and the representation by which Mr. Forster endeavours to sustain it seems to us a showy but untenable refinement. The outline of his argument is that the aristocratic patron had, in Goldsmith's day, by the progress of society, disappeared—he belonged to the past; that the "mercenary" publisher had taken his place—he represented the ugly present; but that the great reading public (that true and equitable patron, as some fancy) had not yet matured its means of effectual action upon literature: this "reading public" virtually, perhaps, belonged to the future. All this I steadfastly deny. No doubt the old full-blown patron, *en grand costume*, with his heraldic bearings emblazoned at the head of the Dedication, was dying

[1] Which tub the reader may fancy to have been only an old tar barrel; but, if so, he is wrong. Isaac Casaubon, after severe researches into the nature of that tub, ascertained to the general satisfaction of Christendom that it was not of wood, or within the restorative powers of a cooper, but of earthenware, and, therefore, once shattered by a horse's kick, quite past repair. In fact, the home of Diogenes was a large oil jar, such as the remnant of the forty thieves lurked in, when waiting for their captain's signal from Ali Baba's house; and, in Attica, it must have cost fifteen shillings, supposing that the philosopher did not steal it. Consequently a week's loss of house-room and credit to Oliver Goldsmith, at the rate of living then prevalent in Grub Street, was pretty much the same thing in money value as the loss to Diogenes of his crockery house by burglary, or in any nocturnal lark of young Attic winebibbers. The underwriters would have done an insurance upon either man at pretty much the same premium.

out, like the golden pippin. But he still lingered in sheltered situations. And part of the machinery by which patronage had ever moved—viz. the use of influence for obtaining subscriptions—was still in capital working order; a fact which we know from Goldsmith himself (see the "Inquiry"[1]), for he tells us that a popular mode of publication amongst bad authors, and certainly it needed no publisher's countersign, was by means of subscription papers: upon which, as I believe, a considerable instalment was usually paid down when as yet the book existed only by way of title-page, supposing that the whole sum was not even paid *up*. Then, as to the publisher, *he* could not have been a weed first springing up in Goldsmith's time, but must always have been an indispensable broker or middleman between the author and the world. In the days even of Horace and Martial, the book-*seller* (bibliopola) clearly acted as book-*publisher*. Amongst other passages proving this, and showing undeniably that Martial at least had sold the copyright of his work to *his* publisher, is one arguing pretty certainly that the price of a gay drawing-room copy must have been hard upon £1 : 11 : 6. Did ever any man hear the like? A New York newspaper would have been too happy to pirate the whole of Martial, had he been three times as big, at the small cost of threepence, *i.e.* six cents. Now, it cannot be supposed that Martial, a gay, light-hearted fellow, willing to let the public have his book for a shilling, or perhaps for love, had been the person to put that ridiculous price upon it. We may conclude that it was the publisher. As to the public, *that* respectable character must always have constituted the true and final court of appeal, silently defying alike the *prestige* of patronage and the intriguing mysteries of publishing. Lordly patronage might fill the sails of one edition, and masterly publishing of three. But the books that ran contagiously through the educated circles, or that lingered amongst them for a generation, must have owed their success to the unbiassed feelings of the reader—not overawed by authority, not mystified by artifice. Varying, however, in whatever proportion as to power, the three

[1] *i.e.* Goldsmith's *Inquiry into Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, published in 1759.—M.

possible parties to an act of publication will always be seen intermittingly at work: the voluptuous, self-indulging public, and the insidious publisher, of course; but even the browbeating patron still exists in a new *avatar*. Formerly he made his descent upon earth in the shape of Dedicatee; and it is true that this august being, to whom dedications burned incense upon an altar, withdrew into sunset and twilight during Goldsmith's period; but he still revisits the glimpses of the moon in the shape of author. When the *auctoritas* of a peer could no longer sell a book by standing at the head of a dedication, it lost none of its power when standing on the title-page as the author. Vast catalogues might be composed of books and pamphlets that have owed a transient success to no other cause on earth than the sonorous title, or the distinguished position, of those who wrote them. Ceasing to patronise other people's books, the grandee has still power to patronise his own. All *celebrities* have this form of patronage. And, for instance, had the boy Jones[1] (otherwise called Inigo Jones) possessed enough of book-making skill to forge a plausible curtain-lecture, as overheard by himself when concealed in Her Majesty's bedroom, ten steam-presses working day and night would not have supplied the public demand; and even Her Majesty must herself have sent for a large-paper copy, were it only to keep herself *au courant* of English literature. In short, first, the extrinsic patronage of books, secondly, the self-patronage of books in right of their merits, and, thirdly, the artificial machineries for diffusing the knowledge of their existence, are three forces in current literature that ever *have* existed, and must exist, in some imperfect degree. Horace recognises them in his

"Non Dî, non homines, non concessere columnæ."

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[1] It may be necessary to explain, for the sake of the many persons who have come amongst the reading public since the period of the incident referred to, that this was a boy called Jones, who was continually entering Buckingham Palace clandestinely, was as regularly ejected by the police, but with respectable pertinacity constantly returned, and on one occasion effected a lodgment in the royal bedchamber. Some happy wit, in just admiration of such perseverance and impudence, christened him by the name of the great architect as *In-I-go Jones.*

The *Dî* are the paramount public, arbitrating finally on the fates of books, and generally on some just ground of judgment, though it may be fearfully exaggerated on the scale of importance. The *homines* are the publishers; and a sad *homo* the publisher sometimes is, particularly when he commits insolvency. But the *columnæ* are those pillars of state, the grandees of our own age, or any other patrons, that support the golden canopy of our transitory pomps, and thus shed an alien glory of coloured light from above upon the books falling within that privileged area.

I am not, therefore, of Mr. Forster's opinion, that Goldsmith fell upon an age less favourable to the expansion of literary powers, or to the attainment of literary distinction, than any other. The patron might be a tradition, but the public was not therefore a bare prophecy. My lord's trumpets had ceased to sound, but the *vox populi* was not therefore muffled. The means, indeed, of diffusive advertisement and of rapid circulation, the combinations of readers into reading societies, and of roads into iron networks, were as yet imperfectly developed. These gave a potent stimulus to periodic literature. And a still more operative difference between ourselves and them is that a new class of people has since then entered our reading public—viz. the class of artisans and of all below the gentry, which working class was in Goldsmith's day a cipher as regarded any real encouragement to literature. In our days, if the "Vicar of Wakefield" had been published as a Christmas tale, it would have produced a fortune to the writer. In Goldsmith's time few below the gentry were readers on any large scale. So far there really *was* a disadvantage; but it was a disadvantage which applied chiefly to novels. The new influx of readers in our times, the collateral affluents into the main river from the mechanic and provincial sections of our population, which have centupled the volume of the original current, cannot be held as telling favourably upon literature, or telling at all, except in the departments of popularised science, of religion, of fictitious tales, and of journalism. To be a reader is no longer, as once it was, to be of a meditative turn. To be a *very* popular author is no longer that honorary distinction which once it might have been amongst

a more elevated, because more select, body of readers. I do not say this invidiously, or with any special reference. But it is evident that writers and readers must often act and react for reciprocal degradation. A writer of this day, either in France or England, to be *very* popular, must be a story-teller—which is a function of literature neither very noble in itself, nor, secondly, tending to permanence. All novels whatever, the best equally with the worst, have faded almost with the generation that produced them. This is a curse written as a superscription above the whole class. The modes of combining characters, the particular objects selected for sympathy, the diction, and often the manners,[1] hold up an imperfect mirror to any generation other than their own. And the reader of novels that belong to any obsolete era, whilst acknowledging the skill of the groupings, or the beauty of the situations, misses the echo to that particular revelation of human nature which has met him in the social aspects of his own day; or too often he is perplexed by an expression which, having dropped into a lower use, disturbs the unity of the impression; or he is revolted by a coarse sentiment, which increasing refinement has made unsuitable to the sex or to the rank of the character. How bestial and degrading at this day seem many of the scenes in Smollett! How coarse are the ideals of Fielding!—his odious Squire Western, his odious Tom Jones! What a gallery of faded histrionic masqueraders is thrown open in the novels of Richardson, powerful as they were once found by the two

[1] Often, but not so uniformly (the reader will think) as the diction, because the manners are sometimes not those of the writer's own age, being ingenious adaptations to meet the modern writer's conjectural ideas of ancient manners. These, however, even in Sir Walter Scott, are precisely the most mouldering parts in the entire architecture, being always (as, for instance in "Ivanhoe") fantastic, caricatured, and betraying the true modern ground gleaming through the artificial tarnish of antiquity. All novels, in every language, are hurrying to decay; and hurrying by *internal* changes, were those all; but in the meantime the everlasting life and fertility of the human mind is for ever accelerating this hurry by *superseding* them—*i.e.* by an external change. Old forms, fading from the interest, or even from the comprehension, have no chance at all as against new forms embodying the same passions. It is only in the grander passions of poetry, allying themselves with forms more abstract and permanent, that such a conflict of the old with the new is possible.

leading nations of the earth.[1] A popular writer, therefore, who, *in order* to be popular, must speak through novels, speaks to what is least permanent in human sensibilities. That is already to be self-degraded. *Secondly*, because the novel-reading class is by far the most comprehensive one, and, being such, must count as a large majority amongst its members those who are poor in capacities of thinking, and are passively resigned to the instinct of immediate pleasure —to these the writer must chiefly humble himself: he must study *their* sympathies, must assume them, must give them back. In our days he must give them back even their own street slang—so servile is the modern novelist's dependence on his *canaille* of an audience. In France, amongst the Sues, &c., it has been found necessary to give back even the closest portraits of obscene atrocities that shun the light, and burrow only in the charnel-houses of vast manufacturing towns. Finally, the very principle of commanding attention only by the interest of a tale, which means the interest of a momentary curiosity, destined to vanish for ever in a sense of satiation, and the interest of a momentary suspense, that, having once collapsed, can never be rekindled, is in itself a confession of reliance upon the meaner functions of the mind. The result from all which is that, to be popular in the most extensive walk of popularity—that is, as a novelist—a writer must generally be in a very considerable degree self-degraded by sycophancy to the lowest order of minds, and cannot (except for mercenary purposes) think himself advantageously placed.

To have missed, therefore, this enormous expansion of the reading public, however unfortunate for Goldsmith's purse, was a great escape for his intellectual purity. Every man has two-edged tendencies lurking within himself, pointing in one direction to what will expand the elevating principles of his nature, pointing in another to what will tempt him to its degradation. A mob is a dreadful audience for chafing and irritating the latent vulgarisms of the human heart. Exag-

[1] "*By the two leading nations of the earth*":—viz. our own and the French. It was little known at any time, and is now forgotten, that Rousseau, Diderot, and all the leading minds in France, made an idol of Richardson, even more consecrated than amongst ourselves.

geration and caricature, before such a tribunal, become inevitable, and sometimes almost a duty. The genial but not very delicate humour of Goldsmith would in such circumstances have slipped, by the most natural of transitions, into buffoonery; the unaffected pathos of Goldsmith would, by a monster audience, have been debauched into theatrical sentimentality. All the motions of Goldsmith's nature moved in the direction of the true, the natural, the sweet, the gentle. In the quiet times, politically speaking, through which his course of life travelled, he found a musical echo to the tenor of his own original sensibilities. In the architecture of European history, as it unfolded its proportions along the line of his own particular experience, there was a symmetry with the proportions of his own unpretending mind. Our revolutionary age would have unsettled his brain. The colossal movements of nations, from within and from without; the sorrow of the times, which searches so deeply; the grandeur of the times, which aspires so loftily: these forces, acting for the last fifty years by secret sympathy upon our fountains of thinking and impassioned speculation, have raised them from depths never visited by our fathers, into altitudes too dizzy for *their* contemplating. This generation and the last, with their dreadful records, would have untuned Goldsmith for writing in the key that suited him; and *us* they would have untuned for understanding his music, had we not learned to understand it in childhood, before the muttering hurricanes in the upper air had begun to reach our young ears, and forced them away to the thundering overhead from the carolling of birds amongst earthly bowers.

Goldsmith, therefore, as regards the political aspects of his own times, was fortunately placed: a thrush or a nightingale is hushed by the thunderings which are awakening to Jove's eagle. But an author stands in relation to other influences than political; and some of these are described by Mr. Forster as peculiarly unfavourable to comfort and respectability at the era of Goldsmith's novitiate in literature. Will Mr. Forster excuse me for quarrelling with his whole doctrine upon this subject—a subject and a doctrine continually forced upon attention in these days by the extending lines of our own literary order, and continually refreshed

in warmth of colouring by the contrast, as regards *social* consideration, between our own literary body and the corresponding order in France. The questions arising have really a general interest, as well as a special one in connexion with Goldsmith ; and therefore I will stir them a little, not with any view of exhausting the philosophy that is applicable to the case, but simply of amusing some readers (since Pliny's remark on history is much more true of any literary anecdotage—viz. that "*quoquo* modo scripta delectat"), and with the more ambitious purpose of recalling some other readers from precipitate conclusions upon a subject where nearly all that is most plausible happens to be most untrue.

Mr. Forster, in his views upon the *social* rights of literature, is rowing pretty nearly in the same boat as Mr. Carlyle in *his* views upon the rights of labour. Each denounces, or by implication denounces, as an oppression and a nuisance, what I believe to be a necessity inalienable from the economy and structure of our society. Some years ago Mr. Carlyle offended us all (or all of us that were interested in social philosophy) by enlarging on a social affliction which few indeed needed to see exposed, but most men would have rejoiced to see remedied, if it were but on paper, and by way of tentative suggestion.[1] Precisely at that point, however, where his aid was invoked, Mr. Carlyle halted. So does Mr. Forster with regard to *his* grievance ; he states it, and we partly understand him—as ancient Pistol says, "we hear him with ears"; and, when we wait for him to go on, saying, "Well, here's a sort of evil in life, how would you redress it? You've shown, or you've made, another hole in the tin-kettle of society ; how do you propose to tinker it?" —behold, he is suddenly almost silent! But this cannot be allowed. The right to insist upon a well-known grievance cannot be granted to that man (Mr. Carlyle, for instance, or Mr. Forster) who uses it as matter of blame and denunciation, unless at the same time he points out the methods by which it could have been prevented. He that simply bemoans an evil has a right to his moan, though he should make no pretensions to a remedy; but he that criminates,

[1] The reference, at the date when this was written, must have been to Carlyle's *Chartism* (1839) or his *Past and Present* (1843).—M.

that imputes the evil as a fault, that charges the evil upon selfishness or neglect lurking in some alterable arrangements of society, has no right to do so unless he can instantly suggest the remedy; for the very first step by which he could have learned that the evil involved a blame, the first step that could have entitled him to denounce it as a wrong, must have been that step which brought him within the knowledge (wanting to everybody else) that it admitted of a cure. A wrong it could not have been, even in *his* eyes, so long as it was a necessity, nor a ground of complaint, until the cure appeared to him a possibility. And the overriding motto for these parallel speculations of Messrs. Carlyle and Forster, in relation to the frailties of our social system, ought to have been—"*Sanabilibus ægrotamus malis.*" (*We are sick—but by maladies that are curable*) Unless with this watchword, they had no right to commence their crusading march. *Curable* evils justify complaints; the incurable justify only prayers.

Why it was that Mr. Carlyle, in particular, halted so steadily at the point where his work of love was first beginning, it is not difficult to guess. As the "statutes at large" have not one word against the liberty of unlicensed hypothesis, it is conceivable that Mr. Carlyle might have indulged a little in that agreeable pastime; but this, he was well aware, would have brought him in one moment under the fire of Political Economy, from the whole vast line of its modern batteries. These gentlemen, the economists, would have torn to ribands, within fifteen minutes, any *positive* speculation for amending the evil. It was better, therefore, to keep within the trenches of the blank negative, pointing to everything as *wrong*, horribly wrong, but never hinting at the mysterious correction of the wrong; which, to this day, we grieve to say, remains as mysterious as ever.[1]

[1] It ought by this time to be known equally amongst governments and philosophers that for the state to promise with sincerity the absorption of surplus labour, as fast as it accumulates, cannot be postulated as a duty, until it can first be demonstrated as a possibility. This was forgotten, however, by Mr. Carlyle, whose vehement complaints that the arable field without a ploughman should be in one county, whilst in another county was the stout ploughman without a field—and sometimes (which was worse still) that the surplus ploughmen should far outnumber the surplus fields—certainly proceeded on the

Passing to Mr. Forster, who (being capable of a splendour so original) disappoints us most when he reminds us of Mr. Carlyle, by the most disagreeable of that gentleman's phraseological forms, and, in this instance, by a speculation twin-sister to the economic one just noticed, I beg to premise that, in anything here said, it is far from my wish to express disaffection to the cause of my literary brothers. I grudge them nothing that they are ever likely to get. I wish even that the House of Commons would see cause for creating state benefices in behalf of us all. But what is the use of benevolently bequeathing larks for dinner to all literary men, in all time coming, if the sky must fall before they can bag our bequest? Suffer me to discuss Mr. Forster's views, not perhaps according to any arrangement of his, but according to the order in which they come back to my own remembrance.

Goldsmith's period, Mr. Forster thinks, was bad—not merely by the transitional misfortune (before noticed) of coming too late for the patron, and too soon for the public (which is the compound ill luck of being a day after one fair and a month too soon for the next), but also by some co-operation in this evil destiny through misconduct on the part of authors themselves. Not "the circumstances" only of authors were damaged, but the "literary character" itself. I am sorry to hear *that*. But, as long as they did not commit murder, I have a great indulgence for the frailties of authors. If ever the "benefit of clergy" could be fairly pleaded, it might have been by Grub Street for petty larceny. The "clergy" they surely could have pleaded; and the call

secret assumption that all this was within the remedial powers of the state. The same doctrine was more openly avowed by various sections of our Radicals, who (in their occasionally insolent petitions to Parliament) many times asserted that one main use and function of a government was to find work for everybody. At length (February and March, 1848) we see this doctrine solemnly adopted by a French body of rulers—self-appointed, indeed, or perhaps appointed by their wives, and so far sure, in a few weeks, to be answerable for nothing; but, on the other hand, adopting it as a practical *undertaking*, in the lawyer's sense, and by no means as a mere gaiety of rhetoric. Meantime, they themselves will be "broken" before they will have had time for being reproached with broken promises, though neither fracture is likely to require much above the length of a quarantine.

for larceny was so audible in their condition that in *them* it might often be called an instinct of self-preservation, which surely was not implanted in man to be disobeyed. One word allow me to say on these three topics:—1, the condition of the literary body in its hard-working section at the time when Goldsmith belonged to it; 2, upon the condition of that same body in England as compared with the corresponding body in France; 3, upon the condition of the body in relation to patronage purely *political*.

1. The pauperised (or Grub Street) section of the literary body, at the date of Goldsmith's taking service amongst it, was (in Mr. Forster's estimate) at its very lowest point of depression. And one comic presumption in favour of that notion I myself remember—viz. that Smart, the prose translator of Horace, and a well-built scholar, actually *let* himself out to a monthly journal on a regular lease of ninety-nine years.[1] What could move the rapacious publisher to draw the lease for this monstrous term of years I cannot conjecture. Surely the villain might have been content with threescore years and ten. But think, reader, of poor Smart two years after, upon another publisher's applying to him vainly for contributions, and angrily demanding what possible objection could be made to offers so liberal, being reduced to answer—"No objection, sir, whatever, except an unexpired term of ninety-seven years yet to run." The publisher saw that he must not apply again in *that* century; and, in fact, Smart could no longer let himself, but must be sublet (if let at all) by the original lessee. Query now—was Smart entitled to vote as a freeholder; and Smart's children (if any were born during the currency of the lease), would they be serfs, and *ascripti prelo?* Goldsmith's own terms of self-conveyance to Griffiths[2]—the terms we mean on which he "conveyed"

[1] When writing this passage, I was not aware that Mr. Forster had himself noticed the case.

[2] Griffiths, a bookseller in Paternoster Row, had started in 1749 a periodical called the *Monthly Review;* and in 1757 he engaged Goldsmith, then in very wretched circumstances, to be his chief hack-writer for the Review, his remuneration to be board in Griffiths's house (which was over his shop in Paternoster Row), with some small pay besides. The engagement was for a year, but lasted only from April to September.—M.

his person and free-agency to the uses of the said Griffiths (or his assigns ?)—do not appear to have been much more dignified than Smart's in the quality of the *conditions*, though considerably so in the duration of the *term;* Goldsmith's lease being only for one year, and not for ninety-nine, so that he had (as the reader perceives) a clear ninety-eight years at his own disposal. I suspect that poor Oliver, in his guileless heart, never congratulated himself on having made a more felicitous bargain. Indeed, it was not so bad, if everything be considered : Goldsmith's situation at the time was bad ; and for that very reason the lease (otherwise monstrous) was *less* bad. He was to have lodging, board, and "a small salary," *very* small, I suspect ; and in return for all these blessings he had nothing to do but to sit still at a table, to work hard from an early hour in the morning until two P.M. (at which elegant hour we presume that the parenthesis of dinner occurred), but also—which, not being an article in the lease, might have been set aside, on a motion before the King's Bench—to endure without mutiny the correction and revisal of all his MSS. by *Mrs.* Griffiths, wife to Dr. Griffiths, the lessee. This affliction of Mrs. *Dr.* Griffiths surmounting his shoulders, and controlling his pen, seems to us not at all less dreadful than that of Sinbad when indorsed with the old man of the sea ; and we, in Goldsmith's place, should certainly have tried how far Sinbad's method of abating the nuisance had lost its efficacy by time—viz. the tempting our oppressor to get drunk once or twice a-day, and then suddenly throwing Mrs. Dr. Griffith off her perch. From that "bad eminence" which she had audaciously usurped what harm could there be in thus dismounting this "old *woman* of the sea" ? And, as to an occasional thump or so on the head, which Mrs. Dr. Griffiths might have caught in tumbling, that was *her* look-out, and might besides have improved her style. For really now, if the candid reader will believe us, we know a case, odd certainly but very true, where a young man, an author by trade, who wrote pretty well, happening to tumble out of a first-floor in London, was afterwards observed to grow very perplexed and almost unintelligible in his style ; until, some years later, having the good fortune (like Wallenstein at Vienna)

to tumble out of a two-pair-of-stairs window, he slightly fractured his skull, but, on the other hand, recovered the brilliancy of his long-fractured style. Some people there are of our acquaintance who would need to tumble out of the garrets before they could seriously improve their style.

Certainly these conditions—the hard work, the being chained by the leg to the writing-table, and above all the having one's pen chained to that of Mrs. Dr. Griffiths—*do* seem to countenance Mr. Forster's idea that Goldsmith's period was the purgatory of authors. And we freely confess that, excepting Smart's ninety-nine years' lease, or the contract between the Devil and Dr. Faustus, we never heard of a harder bargain driven with any literary man. Smart, Faustus, and Goldsmith, were clearly overreached. Yet, after all, was this treatment in any important point (excepting as regards Dr. Faustus) worse than that given to the whole college of Grub Street in the days of Pope? The first edition of the "Dunciad" dates from 1727: Goldsmith's matriculation in Grub Street dates from 1757—just thirty years later; which is one generation. And it is important to remember that Goldsmith, at this time in his twenty-ninth year, was simply an usher at an obscure boarding-school; had never practised writing for the press; and had not even himself any faith at all in his own capacity for writing. It is a singular fact, which we have on Goldsmith's own authority, that until his thirtieth year (that is, the year he spent with Dr. and Mrs. Griffiths) it never entered into his head that literature was his natural vocation. That vanity which has been so uncandidly, and sometimes so falsely, attributed to Goldsmith, was compatible, we see, if at all it existed, with the humblest estimate of himself. Still, however much this deepens our regard for a man of so much genius united with so much simplicity and unassumingness, humility would not be likely to raise his salary; and we must not forget that his own want of self-esteem would reasonably operate on the terms offered by Griffiths. A man who regarded himself as little more than an amanuensis could not expect much better wages than an under-gardener; which perhaps he had. And, weighing all this, we see little

to have altered in the lease,—that was fair enough; only, as regarded the execution of the lease, we really must have protested, under any circumstances, against Mrs. Dr. Griffiths. That woman would have broken the back of a camel, which must be supposed tougher than the heart of an usher. There we should have made a ferocious stand; and should have struck for much higher wages, before we could have brought our mind to think of capitulation. It is remarkable, however, that this year of humble servitude was not only (or as if by accident) the epoch of Goldsmith's intellectual development, but also the occasion of it. Nay, if all were known, perhaps it may have been to Mrs. Dr. Griffiths in particular that we owe that revolution in his self-estimation which made Goldsmith an author by deliberate choice. Hag-ridden every day, he must have plunged and kicked violently to break loose from this harness; but, not impossibly, the very effort of contending with the hag, when brought into collision with his natural desire to soothe the hag, and the inevitable counter-impulse in any continued practice of composition towards the satisfaction at the same time of his own reason and taste, must have furnished a most salutary *palæstra* for the education of his literary powers. When one lives at Rome, one must do as they do at Rome: when one lives with a hag, one must accommodate one's-self to haggish caprices; besides that once in a month the hag might be right; or, if not, and supposing her *always* in the wrong, which perhaps is too much to assume even of Mrs. Dr. Griffiths, *that* would but multiply the difficulties of reconciling *her* demands with the demands of the general reader and of Goldsmith's own judgment. And in the pressure of these difficulties would lie the very value of this rough Spartan education. Rope-dancing cannot be very agreeable in its elementary lessons; but it must be a capital process for calling out the agilities that slumber in a man's legs.

Still, though these hardships turned out so beneficially to Goldsmith's intellectual interests, and, consequently, so much to the advantage of all who have since delighted in his works, not the less on that account they *were* hardships, and hardships that imposed heavy degradation. So far, therefore, they would seem to justify Mr. Forster's characterisation of

Goldsmith's period by comparison with Addison's period [1] on the one side, and our own on the other. But, on better examination, it will be found that this theory is sustained only by an unfair selection of the antithetic objects in the comparison. Compare Addison's age *generally* with Goldsmith's—authors, prosperous or unprosperous, in each age taken indiscriminately—and the two ages will be found to offer "much of a muchness." But, if you take the paupers of one generation to contrast with the grandees of another, how is there any justice in the result? Goldsmith at starting was a penniless man. Except by random accidents, he had not money enough to buy a rope, in case he had fancied himself in want of such a thing. Addison, on the contrary, was the son of a tolerably rich man; lived gaily at a most aristocratic college (Magdalen), in a most aristocratic university; formed early and brilliant connexions with the political party that were magnificently preponderant until the last four years of Queen Anne; travelled on the Continent, not (like Goldsmith) as a mendicant, housing with owls, and thankful for the bounties of a village fair, but with appointments and introductions equal to those of a young nobleman; and became a secretary of state, not by means of his "delicate humour," as Mr. Forster chooses to suppose, but through splendid patronage, and (speaking *Hibernicé*) through a "strong back." He was *backed* by the Whig party. His bad verses, his Blenheim, his Cato in later days, and other rubbish, had been the only part of his works that aided his rise; and even these would have availed him little, had he not originally possessed a *locus standi*, from which he could serve his artilleries of personal flatteries with commanding effect, and could *profit* by his successes. As to the really exquisite part of his writings, *that* did him no yeoman's service at all, nor *could* have done; for he was a made man, and had almost received notice to quit this world of prosperous whiggery, before he had finished those exquisite prose

[1] If Addison died (as I think he did) in 1717, then, because Goldsmith commenced authorship in 1757, there would be forty years between the two periods. But, as it would be fairer to measure from the *centre* of Addison's literary career—*i.e.* from 1707—the difference between their eras would be just half-a-century.

miscellanies. Pope, Swift, Gay, Prior, &c., all owed their social positions to early accidents of good connexions, and sometimes of luck, which would not indeed have supplied the place of personal merit, but which gave lustre and effect to merit where it existed in strength. There were authors quite as poor as Goldsmith in the Addisonian age; there were authors quite as rich as Pope, Steele, &c., in Goldsmith's age, and having the same social standing. Goldsmith struggled with so much distress, not because his period was more inauspicious, but because his connexions and starting advantages were incomparably less important. His profits were so trivial because he started with a capital next to none.

So far as regards the comparison between Goldsmith's age and the one immediately before it. But now, as regards the comparison with our own, removed by two generations, can it be said truly that the literary profession has risen in estimation, or, is rising? There is a difficulty in making such an appraisement; and from different minds there would proceed very different appraisements; and even from the same mind, surveying the case at different stations. For, on the one hand, if a greater breadth of social respectability catches the eye on looking carelessly over the body of our modern literati,—which may be owing chiefly to the large increase of gentlemen that in our day have entered the field of literature,—on the other hand, the hacks and *handicraftsmen*, whom the shallow education of newspaper journalism has introduced to the press, and whom poverty compels to labours not meriting the name of literature, are correspondingly expanding their files. There is, however, one reason from analogy, which may incline us to suppose that a higher consideration is now generally conceded to the purposes of literature, and, consequently, a juster estimate made of the persons who minister to those purposes. Literature, provided we use that word not for the mere literature of knowledge, but for the literature of power—using it for literature as it speaks to what is genial in man, viz. to the human *spirit*, and *not* for literature (falsely so called) as it speaks to the meagre understanding—is a fine art: and not only so; it is the supreme of the fine arts; nobler, for instance, potentially, than painting, or sculpture, or architecture. Now, *all*

the fine arts, *that popularly are called such*, have risen in esteem within the last generation. The most aristocratic of men will now ask into his own society an artist whom fifty years ago he would have transferred to the house-steward's table. And why? Not simply because, more attention having been directed to the arts, more notoriety has gathered about the artist—for that sort of *éclat* would not work any durable change; but it is because, the interest in the arts having gradually become much more of an enlightened interest, the public has been slowly trained to fix its attention upon the *intellect* which is presupposed in the arts, rather than upon the offices of *pleasure* to which they minister. The fine arts have now come to be regarded rather as powers that are to mould than as luxuries that are to embellish. And it has followed that artists are valued more by the elaborate agencies which they guide than by the fugitive sensations of wonder or sympathy which they evoke.

Now, this is a change honourable to both sides. The public has altered its estimate of certain men; and yet has not been able to do so without previously enlarging its idea of the means through which those men operate. It could not elevate the men without previously elevating itself. But, if so, then, in correcting their appreciation of the fine arts, the public must simultaneously have corrected their appreciation of literature; because, whether men have or have not been in the habit of regarding literature as a fine art, this they must have felt—viz. that literature, in its more genial functions, works by the very same organs as the liberal arts, speaks to the same heart, operates through the same compound nature, and educates the same deep sympathies with mysterious ideals of beauty. *There* lies the province of the arts usually acknowledged as fine or liberal: *there* lies the province of fine or liberal literature. And with justifiable pride a *litterateur* may say that *his* fine art wields a sceptre more potent than any other. Literature is more potent than other fine arts, because *deeper* in its impressions according to the usual tenor of human sensibilities; because more *extensive*, in the degree that books are more diffused than pictures or statues; because more *durable*, in the degree that language is durable beyond marble or canvas, and in the degree that

vicarious powers are opened to books for renewing their phœnix immortality through unlimited translations: powers denied to painting except through copies that are feeble, and denied to sculpture except to casts that are costly.

I infer that, as the fine arts have been rising, literature (on the secret feeling that essentially it moves by the same powers) must also have been rising; that, as the arts will continue to rise, literature will continue to rise; and that, in both cases, the men, the ministers, must ascend in social consideration as the things, the ministrations, ascend. But there is another form in which the same result offers itself to my notice; and this should naturally be the last paragraph in this section 1; but, as I have little room to spare, it may do equally well as the first paragraph in section 2: viz. on the condition of our own literary body by comparison with the same body in France.

2. Who were the people amongst ourselves that, throughout the eighteenth century, chiefly came forward as undervaluers of literature? They belonged to two very different classes—the aristocracy and the commercial body, who agreed in the thing, but on very different impulses. To the mercantile man the author was an object of ridicule, from natural poverty; *natural*, because there was no regular connexion between literature and any mode of money-making. By accident the author might *not* be poor, but professionally, or according to any obvious opening for an income, he *was*. Poverty was the badge of all his tribe. Amongst the aristocracy the instinct of contempt, or at least of slight regard, towards literature was supported by the irrelation of literature to the *state*. Aristocracy itself was the flower and fruitage of the state; a nobility was possible only in the ratio of the grandeur and magnificence developed for *social* results; so that a poor and unpopulous nation cannot create a great aristocracy: the flower and foliation must be in relation to the stem and the radix out of which they germinate. Inevitably, therefore, a nobility so great as the English—that, not in pride, but in the mere logic of its political relations, felt its order to be a sort of heraldic shield, charged with the trophies and ancestral glories of the nation—could not but in its *public* scale of appreciation estimate every profession and

rank of men by the mode of their natural connexion with the state. Law and arms, for instance, were honoured, not because any capricious precedent had been established of a title to public honour in favour of those professions, but because, through their essential functions, they opened for themselves a permanent necessity of introsusception into the organism of the state. A great law officer, a great military leader, a popular admiral, is already, by virtue of his functions, a noble in men's account, whether you gave or refused him a title; and in such cases it has always been the policy of an aristocratic state to confer, or even impose, the title, lest the disjunction of the virtual nobility from the titular should gradually disturb the estimate of the latter. But literature, by its very grandeur, is degraded socially; for its relations are essentially cosmopolitan, or, speaking more strictly, not cosmopolitan,—which might mean to all other peoples considered as national states, whereas literature has no relations to any sections or social schisms amongst men: its relations are to the race. In proportion as any literary work rises in its pretensions—for instance, if it works by the highest forms of passion—its *nisus*, its natural effort, is to address the race, and not any individual nation. That it found a bar to this *nisus* in a limited language was but an accident: the essential relations of every great intellectual work are to those capacities in man by which he tends to brotherhood, and not to those by which he tends to alienation. Man is ever coming nearer to agreement, ever narrowing his differences, notwithstanding that the interspace may cost an eternity to traverse. Where the agreement is, not where the difference is,—in the centre of man's affinities, not of his repulsions,—*there* lies the magnetic centre towards which all poetry that is potent, and all philosophy that is faithful, are eternally travelling by natural tendency. Consequently, if indirectly literature may hold a patriotic value as a gay plumage in the cap of a nation, directly, and by a far deeper tendency, literature is essentially alien. A poet, a book, a system of religion, belongs to that nation best qualified for appreciating their powers, and not to the nation which, perhaps by accident, gave them birth. How, then, is it wonderful that an intense organ of the social principle in

a nation—viz. a nobility—should fail, in their professional character, to rate highly, or even to recognise as having any proper existence, a fine art which is by tendency anti-social (anti-social in this sense, that what it seeks it seeks by transcending all social barriers and separations)? Yet it is remarkable that in England, where the aristocracy for three centuries (sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth) paid so little honour, in their public or corporate capacity, to literature, privately they honoured it with a rare courtesy. That same grandee who would have looked upon Camden, Ben Jonson, Selden, or Hobbes, as an audacious intruder, if occupying any prominent station at a state festival, would have received him with a kind of filial reverence in his own mansion; for in this place, as having no national reference, as sacred to hospitality, which regards the human tie, and not the civic tie, this grandee would be at liberty to regard the man of letters in his cosmopolitan character. And, on the same instinct, a prince in the very meanest state would, in a state-pageant commemorating the national honours, assign a distinguished place to the national high admiral, though he were the most stupid of men, and would utterly neglect the stranger Columbus. But in his own palace, and at his own table, he would perhaps invert this order of precedency, and would place Columbus at his own right hand.

Some such principle as is here explained did certainly prevail in the practice (whether consciously perceived or not in the philosophy) of that England which extended through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. First in the eighteenth century all honour to literature, under *any* relation, began to give way. And why? Because expanding politics, expanding partisanship, and expanding journalism, then first called into the field of literature an inferior class of labourers. Then first it was that, from the noblest of professions, literature became a trade. Literature it was that gave the first wound to literature; the hack scribbler it was that first degraded the lofty literary artist. For a century and a-half we have lived under the shade of this fatal revolution. But, however painful such a state of things may be to the keen sensibilities of men pursuing the finest of vocations—carrying forward as inheritors from past generations

the eternal chase after truth, and power, and beauty—still we must hold that the dishonour to literature has issued from internal sources proper to herself, and not from without. The nobility of England have, for three and a-half centuries, personally practised literature as an elevated accomplishment; our royal and noble authors are numerous, and they would have continued the same cordial attentions to the literary body, had that body maintained the same honourable composition. But a *litterateur*, simply *as* such, it is no longer safe to distinguish with favour. Once, but not now, he was liable to no misjudgment. Once he was pretty sure either to be a man of some genius, or, at the least, of unusual scholarship. Now, on the contrary, a mob of traitors have mingled with the true men; and the loyal perish with the disloyal, because it is impossible, in a mob so vast and fluctuating, for the artillery of avenging scorn to select its victims.

All this, bitter in itself, has become *more* bitter from the contrast furnished by France. We know that literature has long been misappreciated amongst ourselves. In France it has long been otherwise appreciated—more advantageously appreciated. And we infer that therefore it is in France more wisely appreciated. But this does not follow. I have ever been of opinion that the valuation of literature in France, or at least of current literature, and as it shows itself in the treatment of literary men, is unsound, extravagant, and that it rests upon a basis originally false. Simply to have been the translator from the English of some prose book, a history or a memoir, neither requiring nor admitting any display of mastery over the resources of the language, conferred, throughout the eighteenth century, so advantageous a position in Parisian society upon one whom we English should view as a mere mechanic drudge, that we really had a right to expect the laws of France and the court ceremonies to reflect this feature of public manners. Naturally, for instance, any man honoured so preposterously ought in law to have enjoyed the *jus trium liberorum*, and perpetual immunity from taxes. Or again, as regards ceremonial honours, on any fair scale of proportions, it was reasonable to expect that to any man who had gone into a fourth edition

the royal sentinels should present arms; that to the author of a successful tragedy the guard should everywhere turn out; and that an epic poet, if ever such a difficult birth should make its epiphany in Paris, must look to have his approach towards a *soirée* announced by a salvo of a hundred-and-one guns.

My space will not allow me to go into the illustrative details of this monstrous anomaly in French society. I confine myself to its cause, as sufficiently explaining why it is that no imitation of such absurdities can or ought to prosper in England. The same state of things, under a different modification, takes place in Germany; and from the very same cause. Is it not monstrous, or *was* it not until within recent days, to find every German city drawing the pedantic materials, and the pedantic interest of its staple conversation, from the systems and the conflicts of a few rival academic professors? Generally these paramount lords of German conversation, that swayed its movements this way or that, as a lively breeze sways a corn-field, were metaphysicians: Fichte, for instance, and Hegel. There were the arid sands that bibulously absorbed all the perennial gushings of German enthusiasm. France of the last century and the modern Germany were, as to this point, on the same level of foolishness. But France had greatly the advantage in point of liberality. For general literature furnishes topics a thousand times more graceful and fitted to blend with social pleasure than the sapless problems of ontological systems meant only for scholastic use.

But what, then, was the cause of this social deformity? Why was literature allowed eventually to disfigure itself by disturbing the natural currents of conversation, to make itself odious by usurpation, and thus virtually to operate as a mode of pedantry? It was because in neither land had the people any power of political discussion. It was because every question growing out of religion, or connecting itself with laws, with government, with governors, with political interests or political machineries, or with judicial courts, was an interdicted theme. The mind sought in despair for some free area wide enough to allow of boundless openings for individualities of sentiment—human enough to sustain the

interests of *social* discussion. That free area was found only in books. In Paris to talk of politics was to talk of the king; *l'état c'est moi;* to talk of the king in any spirit of discussion, to talk of that *Jupiter optimus maximus*, from whom all fountains flowed of good and evil things, before whom stood the two golden urns, one filled with *lettres de cachet*, the other with crosses, pensions, offices—what was it but to dance on the margin of a volcano, or to swim cotillons in the suction of a maelstrom? Hence it was that literature became the only safe colloquial subject of a general nature in old France; hence it was that literature furnished the only "open questions"; and hence it *is* that the mode and the expression of honour to literature in France has continued to this hour tainted with false and histrionic feeling, because originally it grew up from spurious roots, prospered unnaturally upon deep abuses in the social system, and at this day (so far as it still lingers) memorialises the political bondage of the nation. Cleanse, therefore—should be our general prayer—cleanse, O unknown Hercules, this Augean stable of our English current literature, rich in dunghills, rich therefore in precipitate mushroom and fraudulent fungus, yet rich also (if we may utter our real thoughts)—rich pre-eminently at this hour in seed-plots of immortal growths, and in secret vegetations of volcanic strength;—cleanse it (O coming man!), but not by turning through it any river of political Lethe, such as for two centuries swept over the literature of France. Purifying waters were these in one sense: they banished the accumulated depositions of barbarism; they banished Gothic tastes; but they did all this by laying asleep the nobler activities of a great people, and reconciling them to forgetfulness of whatsoever commanded them as duties, or whispered to them as rights.

If, therefore, the false homage of France towards literature still survives, it is no object for imitation amongst *us;* since it arose upon a vicious element in the social composition of that people. Partially it *does* survive, as we all know by the experience of the last thirty years, during which authors, and *as* authors (not, like Mirabeau or Talleyrand, in spite of authorship), have been transferred from libraries to senates and privy councils. This has done no service to literature,

but, on the contrary, has degraded it, by seducing the children of literature from their proper ambition. It is the glory of literature to rise, as if on wings, into an atmosphere nobler than that of political intrigue. And the whole result to French literature has been that some ten or twelve of the leading literati have been tempted away by bribes from their appropriate functions, while some five thousand have been made envious and discontented.

At this point, when warned suddenly that the hour-glass is running out which measures my residuum of flying minutes, I first perceive, on looking round, that I have actually been skirmishing with Mr. Forster from the beginning of my paper to this very line, and have thus left to myself but a corner for the main purpose of expressing emphatically public thanks to him for this successful labour of love in restoring a half-subverted statue to its upright position. I am satisfied that many thousands of readers will utter the same thanks to him, with the same sincerity. Admiration for the versatile ability with which he has pursued his object is swallowed up for the moment in gratitude for his perfect success. It might have been imagined that Goldsmith's exquisite truth of household pathos and of humour, with happy graces of style, plastic as the air or the surface of a lake to the pure impulses of nature sweeping them by the motions of her eternal breath, were qualities authorised to justify themselves before the hearts of men, in defiance of all which affected scorn or the condescension of masquerading envy could effect for their disturbance. And so they are: and, left to plead for themselves at such a bar as unbiassed human hearts, they could not have their natural influences intercepted. But, in the case of Goldsmith, literary traditions have *not* left these qualities to their natural influence. It is a fact that up to this hour the contemporary falsehoods at Goldsmith's expense, and (worse perhaps than those falsehoods) the malicious interpretations of incidents partly true, having wings lent to them by the buoyant and amusing gossip of Boswell, continue to obstruct the full ratification of Goldsmith's pretensions. To this hour, the scorn from many of his own age runs side by side with a misgiving sense of his real native power. A feeling

still survives, originally derived from his own age, that the "inspired idiot," wherever he succeeded, ought *not* to have succeeded—having owed his success to accident, or even to some inexplicable perverseness in running counter to his own nature. It was by shooting awry that he had hit the mark; and, when most he came near to the bull's-eye, most of all "by rights" he ought to have missed it. He had blundered into *The Traveller*, into "Mr. Croaker," into "Tony Lumpkin"; and, not satisfied with such dreadful blunders as these, he had consummated his guilt by blundering into the *Vicar of Wakefield* and the *Deserted Village;* atrocities over which, in effect, we are requested to drop the veil of human charity; since, the more gem-like we may choose to think these works, the more unnatural, audacious, and indeed treasonable, it was in an *idiot* (as Dr. Johnson styled him) to produce them.[1]

In this condition of Goldsmith's traditionary character, so injuriously disturbing to the natural effect of his inimitable works (for in its own class each of his best works *is* inimitable), Mr. Forster steps forward with a threefold exposure of the falsehood inherent in the anecdotes upon which this traditional character has arisen. Some of these anecdotes he challenges as *literally* false; others as virtually so; they are true, perhaps, but under such a version of their circumstances as would altogether take out the sting of their offensive interpretation. For others again,—and this is a profounder service,—he furnishes a most just and philosophic explanation, that brings them at once within the reader's toleration, nay, sometimes within a deep reaction of pity. As a case, for instance, of downright falsehood, we may cite the well-known story told by Boswell—that, when Goldsmith travelled in

[1] De Quincey is decidedly unfair here to Dr. Johnson and the other chief London contemporaries of Goldsmith. While they were amused with his oddities and laughed at them, they never failed to love him and do justice to his genius. Burke burst into tears on hearing of his death; Sir Joshua Reynolds left his painting-room and would do no more work that day; and Johnson, talking of him three months afterwards, wound up with the words, "Let not his frailties be remembered; *he was a very great man.*" De Quincey himself would never have used so high a phrase as this respecting Goldsmith; and, indeed, the tenor of this paper and of the postscript to it proves that his estimate of Goldsmith did not come nearly up to Johnson's mark.—M.

France with some beautiful young Englishwomen (meaning the Miss Hornecks) he was seriously uneasy at the attentions which they received from the gallantry of Frenchmen, as intruding upon his own claims. Now this story, in logical phrase, proves too much. For the man who *could* have expressed such feelings, in such a situation, must have been ripe for Bedlam. Coleridge mentions a man who entertained so exalted an opinion of himself, and of his own right to apotheosis, that he never uttered that great pronoun "*I*" without solemnly taking off his hat. Even to the oblique case "*me*," which no compositor ever honours with a capital *M*, and to the possessive pronoun *my* and *mine*, he held it a duty to bend reverentially. Yet even this bedlamite would not have been a competitor with a lady for the attentions paid to her in right of her sex. In Goldsmith's case the whole allegation was dissipated in the most decisive way. Some years after Goldsmith's death, one of the sisters personally concerned in the case was unaffectedly shocked at the printed story when coming to her knowledge, as a gross calumny; her sorrow made it evident that the whole had been a malicious distortion of some light-hearted gaiety uttered by Goldsmith. There is little doubt that the story of the bloom-coloured coat, and of the puppet-show, rose on a similar basis—the calumnious perversion of a jest.

But in other cases, where there really *may* have been some fretful expression of self-esteem, Mr. Forster's explanation transfers the foible to a truer and a more pathetic station. Goldsmith's own precipitancy, his overmastering defect in proper reserve, in self-control, and in presence of mind, falling in with the habitual undervaluation of many amongst his associates, placed him at a great disadvantage in animated conversation. His very truthfulness, his simplicity, his frankness, his hurry of feeling, all told against him. They betrayed him into inconsiderate expressions that lent a colour of plausibility to the malicious ridicule of those who disliked him the more from being compelled, after all, to respect him. His own understanding oftentimes sided with his disparagers. He *saw* that he had been in the wrong; whilst secretly he *felt* that his meaning—if properly explained—had been right. Defrauded in this way, and by his own co-

operation, of distinctions that naturally belonged to him, he was driven unconsciously to attempt some restoration of the balance by claiming for a moment distinctions to which he had no real pretensions. The whole was a trick of sorrow, and of sorrowing perplexity; he felt that no justice had been done to him, and that he himself had made an opening for the wrong; the result he saw, but the process he could not disentangle; and, in the confusion of his distress, natural irritation threw him upon blind efforts to recover his ground by unfounded claims, when claims so well founded had been maliciously disallowed.

But a day of accounting comes at last—a day of rehearing for the cause, and of revision for the judgment. The longer this review has been delayed, the more impressive it becomes in the changes which it works. Welcome is the spectacle when, after three-fourths of a century have passed away, a writer like Mr. Forster—qualified for such a task by ample knowledge of things and persons, by great powers for a comprehensive estimate of the case and for a splendid exposition of its results, with deep sensibility to the merits of the man chiefly concerned in the issue, enthusiastic, but without partisanship—comes forward to unsettle false verdicts, to recombine misarranged circumstances, and to explain anew misinterpreted facts. Such a man wields the authority of heraldic marshals. Like the Otho of the Roman theatre, he has power to raise or to degrade—to give or to take away precedency; but, like this Otho, he has so much power because he exercises it on known principles, and without caprice. To the man of true genius, like Goldsmith, when seating himself in humility on the lowest bench, he says, "Go thou up to a higher place. Seat thyself above those proud men, that once trampled thee in the dust. Be thy memorial upon earth, not (as of some who scorned thee) 'the whistling of a name':—be thou remembered amongst men by tears of tenderness, by happy laughter untainted with malice, and by the benedictions of those that, reverencing man's nature, see gladly its frailties brought within the gracious smile of human charity, and its nobilities levelled to the apprehension of simplicity and innocence."

Over every grave, even though tenanted by guilt and

shame, the human heart, when circumstantially made acquainted with its silent records of suffering or temptation, yearns in love or in forgiveness to breathe a solemn *Requiescat!* How much more, then, over the grave of a benefactor to the human race! But it is a natural feeling, with respect to such a prayer, that, however fervent and sincere, it has no perfect faith in its own validity, so long as any unsettled feud from ancient calumny hangs over the buried person. The unredressed wrong seems to haunt the sepulchre in the shape of a perpetual disturbance to its rest. First of all, when this wrong has been adjudicated and expiated, is the *Requiescat* uttered with a perfect faith in itself. By a natural confusion we then transfer our own feelings to the occupant of the grave. The tranquillization to our own wounded sense of justice seems like an atonement to *his:* the peace for *us* transforms itself under a fiction of tenderness into a peace for *him:* the reconciliation between the world that did the wrong and the grave that seemed to suffer it is accomplished; the reconciler, in such a case, whoever he may be, seems a double benefactor—to *him* that endured the injury—to *us* that resented it; and in the particular case now before the public we shall all be ready to agree that this reconciling friend, who might have entitled his work *Vindiciæ Oliverianæ*, has, by the piety of his service to a man of exquisite genius, so long and so foully misrepresented, earned a right to interweave forever his own cipher and cognisance in filial union with those of OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

POSTSCRIPT[1]

The article on Goldsmith was one which on any spontaneous impulse I should not have written, as I could not write on that theme with sincere cordiality or with perfect charity; consequently not with perfect freedom of thought.

Do I then question the true and unaffected merit of Goldsmith in that natural field upon which his happy genius gave him a right to succeed? Not at all. Within a humble province the genius of Goldsmith seems to me exquisite. Especially his *Vicar of Wakefield* in its earlier part,—*i.e.* in its delineation of the vicar's simple household when contemplated through the eyes of the vicar himself, unconscious of the effect from his own peculiar mode of delightful egotism, —has always struck me as inimitable; not so, I confess, in the coarser scenes of the latter half. But, for my own part, I had always borne a grudge to Goldsmith on behalf of Shakspere, whom so deeply and so deliberately he had presumed to insult,—once in a travelling scene in the *Vicar*, but once also in a mode less casual and direct. None of us would make it a reproach to a slight and graceful champion that he had not the powers for facing a Jupiter; but, if he himself insisted on affronting this Olympian antagonist, he must not complain that the consequences were defeat to himself, and disgust spreading widely through the circles of those that otherwise would have been his friends. My little paper took the shape of a critique upon Mr. Forster's elaborate

[1] What is here printed as a "postscript" appeared as a portion of De Quincey's "Preface" to Vol. V of his Collected Writings,—in which Vol. V the reprint of the Goldsmith paper was included.—M.

and splendid review of Goldsmith's life and literary career. To Mr. Forster I owe a large apology for having so inadequately reported the character and qualities of his *Vindiciæ Oliverianæ.* This failure was due to a deep-seated nervous derangement, under which at that time, and for years previously, I had been suffering. But neither ill health, nor resentment in the interest of insulted Shakspere, was suffered for a moment to colour the expression of my respectful gratitude to Goldsmith. Yet some readers will say, Would it not have been better frankly to explain the ground of my secret irritation? No: because the express purpose of Mr. Forster's book had been to offer a homage of retribution to the injured memory of Goldsmith; and I, sympathising on deep grounds of justice and rightful indignation with that honourable purpose, assumed, as it were, on behalf of our common sentiments, the character of a judicial advocate, or even for the moment of a eulogist. I, adopting in the main, as a junior counsel, the views and feelings of my leader, was not at liberty in that situation to break the continuity of the potent reaction on behalf of Goldsmith which Mr. Forster's earnest researches were fitted to evoke. I was not at liberty to disturb by any murmur of dissent the reader's paternal sympathy with the general movement.

THE LAST DAYS OF IMMANUEL KANT[1]

I TAKE it for granted that all people of education will acknowledge some interest in the *personal* history of Immanuel Kant, however little their taste or their opportunities may have brought them acquainted with the history of Kant's philosophical opinions. A great man, though in an unpopular path, must always be an object of liberal curiosity. To suppose a reader thoroughly indifferent to Kant is to suppose him thoroughly unintellectual; and, therefore, though in reality he should happen *not* to regard Kant with interest, it would still be amongst the fictions of courtesy to presume that he *did*. On this principle I make no apology to any reader, philosophic or not, Goth or Vandal, Hun or Saracen, for detaining him upon a short sketch of Kant's life and domestic habits, drawn from the authentic records of his friends and pupils. It is true that, without any illiberality on the part of the public, the *works* of Kant are not, in this country, regarded with the same interest which has gathered about his *name*; and this may be attributed to three causes:

[1] This paper appeared originally in *Blackwood's Magazine* for February 1827, as part of a series which De Quincey had begun under the general title "Gallery of the German Prose Classics, by the English Opium-Eater." The preceding figure in the gallery had been Lessing, represented critically; and Kant followed in this more biographical guise. Considerable changes were made in the paper when De Quincey reprinted it in 1854 in the third volume of the collective edition of his writings.—M.

first, to the language in which those works are written[1]; secondly, to the supposed obscurity of the philosophy which they deliver, whether inalienable, or due to Kant's particular mode of expounding it; thirdly, to the unpopularity of *all* speculative philosophy whatsoever, no matter how treated, in

[1] "*The language*," &c. :—viz. German. For it was a significant fact—significant of that great revolution in conscious dignity which, early in the eighteenth century, had begun to dawn upon the German race—that Leibnitz, the forerunner of Kant, holding the same station in philosophy for the fifty years between 1666 and 1716 which Kant held for the fifty years between 1750 and 1800, wrote chiefly in French; and, if at any time not in French, then in Latin; whereas Kant wrote almost exclusively in German. And why? Simply because all the sovereign princes in Germany, that found nothing amiss in German dollars and crowns, drew their little Aulic machineries in so servile a spirit of mimicry from France that the very breath of their nostrils was the foul, heated atmosphere of Versailles, "laid on" (as our water companies say) at second-hand for German use. The air of German forests which once Arminius had found good enough, the language of Germany that Luther had made resonant as a trumpet of resurrection—these were not superfine enough for the *Serenissimi* of Germany. Even Fritz the unique (*Friederich der Einziger*),—which was the German name, the caressing name, for the man whom in England we call the *great* king of Prussia,—the hero of the Seven Years' War, the friend and also the enemy of Voltaire, in this respect was even more abject than his predecessors. But, if he did not alter, Germany *did*. The great power and compass of the German language, which the vilest of anti-national servilities obscured to the eyes of those that occupied thrones, had gradually revealed themselves to the popular mind of Germany, as it advanced in culture. And thence it happened that Kant's writings were almost exclusively in German; or, if in any case *not* in German, then in Latin, but Latin only upon an academic necessity. This prosperity, however, of the German language proved the misfortune of Kant's philosophy. For many years *his* philosophy was accessible only to those who read German, an accomplishment exceedingly rare down to the era of Waterloo; or, if in any quarter *not* rare (as amongst the travelling agents of great commercial houses that exported to Germany, and amongst the clerks of bankers), not likely to be disposable for purposes of literature or philosophy. Since then Kant has been translated into Latin—viz. by Born, whose version I have not seen; and, as respects Kant's cardinal work, admirably by Phiseldek, a Danish professor; and it is possible by others unknown to myself. He has also been translated into English; but, if the slight fragment once communicated to myself were at all a fair representative specimen of the prevailing style, not in such English as could have much chance of winning a favourable audience. To do *that*, however, it may be said, would be beyond all powers that ever yet were lodged in *any* language wielded by *any* artist. And, if so,

a country where the structure and tendency of society impress upon the whole activities of the nation a direction almost exclusively practical.[1] But, whatever may have been the immediate fortunes of his writings, no man of enlightened curiosity will regard the author himself without something of

does it not seem invidious to tax this particular version, however unskilful, with a failure that must for all substantial results have attended any possible version, though in the highest degree judicious and masterly? I answer that, no doubt, mere skill in the treatment of language could not avail to popularise a philosophy essentially obscure. Popular the Transcendental Philosophy cannot be. That is not its destiny. But, in those days when as yet German was a sealed language, a judicious version might have availed to disarm this philosophy of all that is likely to prove offensive at first sight. The few who in any nation are capable of mastering it might have been conciliated; at any rate, they did not need to find anything *primâ facie* repulsive, or gratuitously repulsive, in its diction; and, here as in other cases, these few would gradually have diffused much of what was chiefly valuable amongst the many Were it only as to logic and as to ethics, there would have arisen the benefits of a new and severer legislation. Logic, with its proper field and boundaries more rigorously ascertained, would have re-entered upon its rights; renouncing a jurisdiction *not* its own, it would have wielded with more authority and effect that which *is*. And ethics, braced up into stoical vigour by renouncing all effeminate dallyings with *Eudæmonism*, would indirectly have co-operated with the sublime ideals of Christianity.

[1] "*Exclusively practical*":—At the time when this was written it might be regarded as nearer to the truth than now, and so far less needing an apology. But, on closer consideration, I doubt whether at any period this were true in the degree assumed by rash popular judgments. The speculative philosophy of England has at all times tended to hide itself in theology. In her divinity lurks her philosophy. For more than three centuries the divinity of England has formed a magnificent section in the national literature. In reality there are but two learned churches in the world—not more, therefore, than two systematic theologies: first, the Papal; secondly, amongst Protestant churches, the Anglican. But is there not also the German? Yes, there is also a German theology, and *has* been any time these forty years. And with respect to this, which styles itself (upon mixed motives of cowardice and self-interest) a *Protestant* theology, it is quite sufficient to say that it presents no *unity* of any kind, good or bad. It is a distracted, fragmentary thing; without internal cohesion; offering no systematic whole; starting from no avowed creed, and controlled by no common principles of interpretation. But is it not a learned theology, and, secondly, a Protestant theology? As to the first question, any candid man will answer by distinguishing. If philology, and *that* alone, were equal to the task of building up a systematic divinity, then is the German in a supreme degree learned.

a profounder interest. Measured by one test of power—viz by the number of books written directly for or against himself, to say nothing of those which indirectly he has modified—there is no philosophic writer whatsoever, if we except Aristotle, Des Cartes, and Locke, who can pretend to approach Kant in the extent or in the depth of influence which he has exercised over the minds of men. Such being his claims upon our notice, I repeat that it is no more than a reasonable act of respect for the reader to presume in him so much interest about Kant as will justify this brief memorial sketch of his life and habits.

Immanuel Kant,[1] the second of six children, was born at

But I deny that the enormous labours of three and a-half centuries, accumulated by our Anglican Church, by the Gallican Church, by various branches of the Romish Church more strictly Papal, can be resolved into mere philology. All studies connected with language having become in our day more critically exact, and with great advantages for accurate research, so far the German is seen under a favourable light. But, in the meantime, its labours of thought and far-stretching meditative collation are as children's play by comparison with the colossal contributions of our own heroic workmen in that field. As to the second question, the answer is short and peremptory. Is it not Protestant? No; *sans phrase*, no. Neither could it ever have been fancied such, unless under the following fallacy:—The characteristic principle of Protestantism is supposed to be the right of private judgment: without scruple, therefore, it is usual to say, all Protestants exercise the right of private judgment. Upon which comes some German, who reverses the rule—saying, all men exercising the right of private judgment are Protestants. Under that courteous indulgence, German theology *is* Protestant, for assuredly there is no want of private judgment or audacity. But, in the meantime, the value or efficacy of such a designation has exhaled into smoke. *That* cannot be Protestant which assumes by fits all possible relations to all conceivable subjects. It is enough to say that the German theology is altogether at sea, drifting in any chance direction, according to the impulse which it receives: sometimes obedient to a random caprice in the individual writer, sometimes to a momentary fashion of thought in the age. It presents almost as many incoherent theologies as there are of individual authors. And, finally, under any extremity of feud and schism, there is no recognised court (I speak figuratively, meaning no intellectual tribunal) for arbitration or appeal.

[1] By the paternal side, the family of Kant was of Scotch derivation; and hence it is that the name was written by Kant the father *Cant*,—that being a Scotch name, and still to be found in Scotland. But Immanuel substituted a *K* for a *C*, in order to adapt it better to the analogies of the German language.

Königsberg, in Prussia (a city at that time containing about fifty thousand inhabitants), on the 22d of April 1724. His parents were people of humble rank, and not rich even for their own station, but able (with some assistance from a near relative, and with a trifle in addition from a gentleman who esteemed them for their piety and domestic virtues) to give their son Immanuel a liberal education. He was sent, when a child, to a charity school; and in the year 1732 was removed to the Royal (or Frederician) Academy. Here he studied the Greek and Latin classics, and formed an intimacy with one of his school-fellows, David Ruhnken (afterwards so well known to scholars under his Latinised name of Ruhnkenius), which lasted until the death of the latter. In 1737 Kant lost his mother, a woman of exalted character, and of intellectual accomplishments beyond her rank, who contributed to the future eminence of her illustrious son by the direction which she impressed upon his youthful thoughts, and by the elevated morals to which she trained him. Kant never spoke of her to the end of his life without the utmost tenderness, or without earnest acknowledgment of his obligations to her maternal care.

In 1740, at Michaelmas, he entered the University of Konigsberg. In 1746, when about twenty-two years old, he wrote his first work, upon a question partly mathematical and partly philosophic—viz. the valuation of living forces. The question concerned had been first moved by Leibnitz, in opposition to the Cartesians; a new *law* of valuation, and not merely a new valuation, was insisted on by Leibnitz; and the dispute was supposed to have been here at last and finally settled, after having occupied most of the great European mathematicians for more than half-a-century. Kant's "Dissertation" was dedicated to the King of Prussia, but never reached him; having, in fact (though printed, I believe), never been published.[1] From this time till 1770 Kant supported himself as a private tutor in different families,

[1] To this circumstance we must attribute its being so little known amongst the philosophers and mathematicians of foreign countries, and also the fact that D'Alembert, whose philosophy was miserably below his mathematics, many years afterwards still continued to represent the dispute as a verbal one.

or by giving private lectures in Königsberg, especially to military men on the art of fortification. In 1770 he was appointed to the Chair of Mathematics, which he exchanged soon after for that of Logic and Metaphysics. On this occasion he delivered an inaugural disputation (*De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Formâ et Principiis*), which is remarkable for containing the first germs[1] of the Transcendental Philosophy. In 1781 he published his great work, the "Kritik der Reinen Vernunft," or "Critical Investigation of the Pure Reason." On February 12, 1804, he died.

These are the great epochs of Kant's life. But his was a life remarkable not so much for its incidents as for the purity and philosophic dignity of its daily tenor; and of this the best impression will be obtained from Wasianski's memorials,—checked and supported by the collateral testimonies of Jachmann, Rink, Borowski, and others.[2] We see him here struggling with the misery of decaying faculties, and with the pain, depression, and agitation of two different complaints—one affecting his stomach, and the other his head; over all which the benignity and nobility of his nature mount, as if on wings, victoriously to the last. The principal defect of this and all other memoirs of Kant is, that they report too little of his conversation and opinions. And perhaps the reader will be disposed to complain that some of the notices are too minute and circumstantial, so as to be at one time undignified, and at another unfeeling. With respect to the first objection, it may be answered, that biographical gossip of this sort, and ungentlemanly scrutiny into a man's private life, though not what a man of honour would allow himself to write, may be read without blame, and, where a great man is the subject, sometimes with ad-

[1] "*The first germs*":—Such, I believe, is the prevailing phrase, but in reality much more than germs. To me this memorable essay seems rather to resemble an abstract of the "Kritik der Reinen Vernunft," from a dim recollection of it, than a foreshadowing of its outline by any effort of imperfect preconception.

[2] Wasianski's account of Kant in his last years was published at Königsberg in 1804, the year of Kant's death; the publications of Borowski and Jachmann were of the same date and at the same place.—M.

vantage. As to the other objection, I should hardly know how to excuse Mr. Wasiański for kneeling at the bedside of his dying friend in order to record, with the accuracy of a short-hand reporter, the last flutter of Kant's pulse, and the struggles of nature labouring in extremity, except by supposing that his idealised conception of Kant, as of one belonging to all ages, seemed in *his* mind to transcend and swallow up the ordinary restraints of human sensibility, and that, under this impression, he gave *that* to his sense of a public duty which, it may be hoped, he would willingly have declined on the impulse of his private affections. Now let us begin, premising that for the most part it is Wasianski who speaks.[1]

My knowledge of Professor Kant began long before the period to which this little memorial of him chiefly refers. In the year 1773 or 1774, I cannot exactly say which, I attended his lectures Afterwards I acted as his amanuensis; and in that office was naturally brought into a closer connexion with him than any other of the students; so that, without any request on my part, he granted me a general privilege of free access to his class-room. In 1780 I took orders, and withdrew myself from all connexion with the university. I still continued, however, to reside in Konigsberg; but wholly forgotten, or at any rate wholly unnoticed, by Kant. Ten years later (that is to say, in 1790), I met

[1] "*It is Wasianski who speaks*":—This notification, however, must not be too rigorously interpreted. Undoubtedly it would be wrong, and of evil example, to distribute and confound the separate responsibilities of men. When the opinions involve important moral distinctions, by all means let every man hang by his own hook, and answer for no more than he has solemnly undertaken for. But, on the other hand, it would be most annoying to the reader if all the petty recollections of some ten or fourteen men reporting upon Kant were individually to be labelled each with its separate certificate of origin and ownership. *Wasianski loquitur* may be regarded as the running title: but it is not, therefore, to be understood that Wasianski is always responsible for each particular opinion or fact reported, unless where it is liable to doubt or controversy. In that case, the responsibility is cautiously discriminated and restricted. [The meaning substantially is that what follows, though mainly translated from Wasianski, is a coagulation, in De Quincey's own style and with touches of his own, of information from various German sources.—M.]

him by accident at a gay festal party; in fact it was a wedding party, and the wedding was that of a Konigsberg professor. At table Kant distributed his conversation and attentions pretty generally; but after the entertainment, when the company had dispersed into separate groups, he came and seated himself obligingly by my side. At that time I was a florist—an amateur, I mean, from the passion I had for flowers; upon learning which he talked of my favourite pursuit, and with very extensive information. In the course of our conversation, I was surprised to find that he was perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances of my situation. He reminded me of our previous connexion; expressed his satisfaction at finding that I was happy; and was so good as to desire that, if my engagements allowed me, I would now and then come and dine with him. Soon after this he rose to take his leave; and, as our roads lay in the same direction, he proposed to me that I should accompany him home. I did so; and then received an invitation for the next week, with a general invitation for every week after, and permission to name my own day. At first I found it difficult to account for the distinction with which Kant had treated me; and I conjectured that some obliging friend might have spoken of me, in his hearing, somewhat more advantageously than belonged to my humble pretensions; but more intimate experience has convinced me that he was in the habit of making continual inquiries after the welfare of his former pupils, and was heartily rejoiced to hear of their prosperity. So that it appeared I was wrong in thinking he had forgotten me.

This revival of my intimacy with Kant coincided pretty nearly, in point of time, with a complete change in his own domestic arrangements. Up to this period it had been his custom to dine at a *table d'hôte.* But he now began to keep house himself, and every day invited a few friends to dine with him, so as to fix the party (himself included) at three for the lower extreme, and at nine for the upper, and upon any little festival from five to eight. He was, in fact, a punctual observer of Lord Chesterfield's rule[1]—that his

[1] This was no rule of Lord Chesterfield's, but a rule bequeathed to us by the classical ages of Greece. Not happening, however, to

dinner party, himself included, should not fall below the number of the Graces, nor exceed that of the Muses. In the whole economy of his household arrangements, and especially of his dinner parties, there was something peculiar, and amusingly opposed to the conventional usage of society; not, however, that there was any neglect of decorum, such as sometimes occurs in houses where there are no ladies to impress a better tone upon the manners. The routine, which under no circumstances either varied or relaxed, was this:—No sooner was dinner ready than Lampe, the professor's old footman, stepped into the study with a certain measured air, and announced it. This summons was obeyed at a pace of double-quick time—Kant talking all the way to the eating-room about the state of the weather,[1] a subject which he usually pursued during the earlier part of the dinner. Graver themes, such as the political events of the day, were never introduced before dinner, or at all in his study. The moment that Kant had taken his seat, and unfolded his napkin, he opened the business of the hour with a particular formula—"*Now, then, gentlemen!*" The words are nothing; but the tone and air with which he uttered them proclaimed, in a way that nobody could mistake, relaxation from the toils of the morning, and determinate abandonment of himself to social enjoyment. The table was hospitably spread; a sufficient choice of dishes there was to meet the variety of tastes; and the decanters of wine were placed, not on a distant sideboard, or under the odious control of a servant (first cousin to the Barmecides), but anacreontically on the table, and at the elbow of every guest.[2] Every person helped himself; and

remember this, and looking out for some suitable person to invest with the paternity of so graceful a formula, the German writer showed his judgment in fixing upon Lord Chesterfield; for, though *not* his, the *mot* is really not better than many that *are*: it ought to be his.

[1] His reason for which was that he considered the weather one of the principal forces which act upon the health; and his own frame was exquisitely sensible to all atmospheric influences.

[2] Something is said or insinuated, by some of the contributors to this record, about second courses. But, in strict truth, when speaking of so humble a *menage* as that of any scholar possessing no private fortune, or (like Kant) none beyond that modest one of about £4000 sterling which forty years of frugality had won from the narrow appointments of his academic office, one is obliged to recollect that

all delays, from too elaborate a spirit of ceremony, were so disagreeable to Kant that he seldom failed to express his displeasure with anything of that sort, though not angrily. For this hatred of delay Kant had a special excuse, having always worked hard from an early hour in the morning, and eaten nothing until dinner. Hence it was that in the latter period of his life, though less perhaps from actual hunger than from some uneasy sensation of habit or periodical irritation of stomach, he could hardly wait with patience for the arrival of the last person invited.

There was no friend of Kant's but considered the day on which he was to dine with him as a day of festal pleasure. Without giving himself the air of an instructor, Kant really was such in the very highest degree. The whole entertainment was seasoned with the overflow of his enlightened mind, poured out naturally and unaffectedly upon every topic, as the chances of conversation suggested it ; and the time flew rapidly away, from one o'clock to four, five, or even

anything whatever in the shape of a *remove* will stand good for a technical "*course.*" I knew a man who presented his guests with a plate of water-cresses and radishes, as what he called a third course, and two kinds of biscuits as a *fourth.* Meantime, I have myself drawn from a private source some information (liable to no doubt whatsoever) which would partially set aside the reports of Wasianski and Rink. Do I therefore allow myself to question the veracity of these gentlemen ? Not at all. The mere triviality of the whole case is a sufficient guarantee of their accuracy. But of necessity they (one as much as the other) spoke to a particular period—a month, or a year. My two informants spoke to far different periods—differing by five and nine years from the period of Wasianski, and each from the other differing by four. These two informants (one of them an Englishman, long settled as a merchant at Konigsberg) described to me a dinner in all its circumstantial features. The sum of their information was that in those days Kant's dinners, if at all of the festival class commemorating any interesting event, were long and loitering, as indeed all dinners ought to be which minister to colloquial pleasures as their primary objects. They lasted through three or four hours ; and the dishes were not placed on the table at all, but were handed round one by one in succession. On this plan it was out of the question to talk of courses. People leaned back in their chairs, as at any aristocratic dinner in England, for half-hours together, simply conversing, and recurring only at intervals to the business of eating, when any dish happened to be offered which specially attracted the particular guest.

later, profitably and delightfully. Kant tolerated no lulls, which was the name he gave to the momentary pauses in conversation, when its animation languished. Some means or other he always devised for rekindling its tone of interest; and in this he was much assisted by the tact with which he drew from every guest his peculiar tastes, or the particular direction of his pursuits; and on these, be they what they might, he was never unprepared to speak with knowledge, and with the interest of an original observer. The local affairs of Königsberg must have been interesting indeed before they could be allowed to usurp attention at *his* table. And, what may seem still more singular, it was rarely or never that he directed the conversation to any branch of the philosophy founded by himself. Indeed he was perfectly free from the fault which besets so many *savans* and *literati*, of intolerance towards those whose pursuits might happen to have disqualified them for any special sympathy with his own. His style of conversation was popular in the highest degree, and unscholastic; so much so that any stranger acquainted with his works, but not with his person, would have found it difficult to believe that in this delightful and genial companion he saw the profound author of the Transcendental Philosophy.

The subjects of conversation at Kant's table were drawn chiefly from natural philosophy, chemistry, meteorology, natural history, and, above all, from politics. The news of the day, as reported in the newspapers, was discussed with a peculiar vigilance of examination.[1] With regard to any

[1] And even with a searching spirit of scepticism, for which all the journals in central Europe (as then conducted) furnished but too much justification. In none of the German states was there, nor could there have been, either illumination to discern or freedom to choose. The French Revolution had suddenly begun to rock, like a succession of earthquakes, beneath and round about all thrones. Awful chasms in the midst of portentous gloom, equally uncertain for their extent and their direction, seemed opening and yawning beneath men's feet. And, at a time when the kings of Christendom could rationally have faced the new-born dreadful republic on the Seine in no rational spirit of hope but such as rested on fraternal alliance and absolute good faith, most of them were perfidiously undermining, by secret intrigues for purely selfish objects, those great military confederacies on which ostensibly they relied. Prussia, above all, in the

narrative that wanted dates of time and place, plausible as it might otherwise seem, he was uniformly an inexorable sceptic, and held it unworthy of repetition. So keen was his penetration into the interior of political events, and the secret policy under which they moved, that he talked rather with the authority of a diplomatic person who had access to cabinet intelligence, than as a simple spectator of the great scenes which were in those days unfolding throughout Europe. At the time of the French Revolution, he threw out many conjectures, and what then passed for paradoxical anticipations, especially in regard to military operations, which were as punctually fulfilled as his own memorable conjecture in regard to the hiatus in the planetary system between Mars and Jupiter,[1] the entire confirmation of which

very noon of her aggressive movements against France, and in the mid ravings of her hellish menaces against Paris (such as furnished but too colourable a plea to the atrocities that subsequently turned France into a butcher's shambles), was playing the traitress to her engagements from the first—fixing her hungry eye upon the approaching wrecks of Poland, and, in captivity to this fierce vulture instinct, as if scenting continually the odour of distant carrion in the East, altogether overlooking her great military interests in the West, so perilously confided to the Duke of Brunswick. To the stern integrity of Kant all such double-dealing was hateful. That it should be imputed to his own country grieved him profoundly. Personally he was known to the reigning King of Prussia; had been treated by that prince with distinguished consideration; and thus had an *extra* motive for refusing at first to read the signs of the Prussian policy as many others read them. But he was too sagacious not to suspect them; and the evidences of this deep treachery, which laid the foundation for suffering so incalculable to all the states of Christendom, but to none so much as to Prussia herself from 1806 to 1813, finally became irresistible.

[1] Vesta and Juno were discovered in June 1804, about the time when Wasianski wrote. Meantime, I do not profess to understand my German authorities at this point. Any *hiatus* in the planetary system that Kant suspected, so far as I am acquainted with his views, did not lie between Mars and Jupiter, but in a higher region; neither was it of a nature to be remedied by bodies so small as Ceres and Pallas. What Kant had indicated as an apparent ground for presuming some *hiatus* in our own system was the abruptness of the transition from one order of orbits to another—viz. from the *planetary*, which might be regarded as by tendency circular, to the *cometary* order, which departs from this tendency by all degrees of eccentricity The passing of the first into the last seemed to Kant not properly graduated: it was discontinuous. He presumed, there-

he lived to witness on the discovery of Ceres by Piazzi, and of Pallas by Dr. Olbers.* These two discoveries, by the way, impressed him much; and they furnished a topic on which he always talked with pleasure; though, according to his usual modesty, he never said a word of his own sagacity in having upon *a priori* grounds shown the probability of such discoveries many years before.

It was not only in the character of a companion that Kant shone, but also as a most courteous and liberal host, who had no greater pleasure than in seeing his guests happy and jovial, and rising with exhilarated spirits from the mixed pleasures—intellectual and liberally sensual—of his Platonic banquets. Chiefly, perhaps, with a view to the sustaining of genial hilarity, he showed himself somewhat of an artist in the composition of his dinner parties. Two rules there were which he obviously observed, and I may say invariably. The first was that the company should be miscellaneous; this for the sake of securing sufficient variety to the conversation: and accordingly his parties presented as much variety as the world of Königsberg afforded, being drawn from all varieties of life—men in office, professors, physicians, clergymen, and enlightened merchants. His second rule was to have a due balance of *young* men, frequently of *very* young men, selected from the students of the university, in order to impress a movement of gaiety and juvenile playfulness on the conversation; an additional motive for which, as I have reason to believe, was that in this way he withdrew his mind from the sadness which sometimes overshadowed it for the early deaths of some young friends whom he loved.

fore, that between the outermost known planet, which at that time was Saturn, and the cometary system, some great planet must exist that would constitute a link of transition—as being more eccentric than Saturn, and less so than the nearest of the comets. Not very long after was discovered by Herschel (the father) the great planet *Uranus*, or (as it was called by the discoverer in a spirit of gratitude to his patron) the *Georgium Sidus*. This discovery was so far a justification of Kant's conjecture; which conjecture was altogether an *a priori* speculation, like that which led to the discovery of Neptune,—that is, it did not by one iota rest upon any experimental hint, but upon necessities *a priori*.

And this leads me to mention a singular feature in Kant's way of expressing his sympathy with his friends in sickness. So long as the danger was imminent, he testified a restless anxiety, made perpetual inquiries, waited with impatience for the crisis, and sometimes could not pursue his customary labours from agitation of mind. But no sooner was the patient's death announced than he recovered his composure, and assumed an air of stern tranquillity—almost of indifference. The reason was that he viewed life in general, and therefore that particular affection of life which we call sickness, as a state of oscillation and perpetual change, between which and the fluctuating sympathies of hope and fear there was a natural proportion that justified them to the reason; whereas death—as a permanent state that admitted of no *more* and no *less*, that terminated all anxiety, and for ever extinguished the agitations of suspense—he regarded as not adapted to any state of feeling but one of the same enduring and unchanging character. However, all this philosophic heroism gave way on one occasion; for many persons will remember the tumultuous grief which he manifested upon the death of Mr. Ehrenboth, a young man of very fine understanding and extensive attainments, for whom he had the greatest affection. And naturally it happened, in so long a life as his, in spite of his provident rule for selecting his social companions as much as possible amongst the young, that he had to mourn for many a heavy loss that could never be supplied to him.

To return, however, to the course of his day: immediately after the termination of his dinner party, Kant walked out for exercise; but on this occasion he never took any companion; partly, perhaps, because he thought it right, after so much convivial and colloquial relaxation, to pursue his meditations,[1] and partly (as I happen to know) for this very pecu-

[1] Mr. Wasianski is wrong. To pursue his meditations under these circumstances might, perhaps, be an inclination of Kant's to which he yielded, but not one which he would justify or erect into a maxim. He disapproved of eating alone, or *solipsismus convictorii*, as he calls it, on the principle that a man would be apt, if not called off by the business and pleasure of a social party, to think too much or too closely, an exercise which he considered very injurious to the stomach during the first process of digestion. On the same principle he dis-

liar reason—that he wished to breathe exclusively through his nostrils; which he could not do if he were obliged continually to open his mouth in conversation. His reason for this wish was that the atmospheric air, being thus carried round by a longer circuit, and reaching the lungs, therefore, in a state of less rawness, and at a temperature somewhat higher, would be less apt to irritate them. By a steady perseverance in this practice, which he constantly recommended to his friends, he flattered himself with a long immunity from coughs, hoarsenesses, catarrhs, and all modes of pulmonary derangement; and the fact really was that these troublesome affections attacked him very rarely. Indeed, I myself, by only occasionally adopting his rule, have found my chest not so liable as formerly to such attacks.

On returning from his walk, he sat down to his library table, and read till dusk. During this period of dubious light, so friendly to thought, he rested in tranquil meditation on what he had been reading, provided the book were worth it; if not, he sketched his lecture for the next day, or some part of any book he might then be composing. During this state of repose, he took his station winter and summer by the stove, looking through the window at the old tower of Löbenicht; not that he could be said properly to see it, but the tower rested upon his eye as distant music on the ear—obscurely, or but half revealed to the consciousness. No words seem forcible enough to express his sense of the gratification which he derived from this old tower, when seen under these circumstances of twilight and quiet reverie. The sequel, indeed, showed how important it had become to his comfort; for at length some poplars in a neighbouring garden shot up to such a height as to obscure the tower, upon which Kant became very uneasy and restless, and at length found himself positively unable to pursue his evening meditations. Fortunately, the proprietor of the garden was a very considerate and obliging person, who had, besides, a high regard for Kant; and, accordingly, upon a representation of the case being made to him, he gave

approved of walking or riding alone; the double exercise of thinking and of bodily agitation, carried on simultaneously, being calculated, as he conceived, to press too hard upon the stomach.

orders that the poplars should be cropped. This was done, the old tower of Lobenicht was again exposed; Kant recovered his equanimity, and once more found himself able to pursue his twilight meditations in peace.

After the candles were brought, Kant prosecuted his studies till nearly ten o'clock. A quarter-of-an-hour before retiring for the night, he withdrew his mind as much as possible from every class of thoughts which demanded any exertion or energy of attention, on the principle that, by stimulating and exciting him too much, such thoughts would be apt to cause wakefulness; and the slightest interference with his customary hour of falling asleep was in the highest degree unpleasant to him. Happily, this was with him a very rare occurrence. He undressed himself without his servant's assistance; but in such an order, and with such a Roman regard to decorum and the τὸ πρέπον, that he was always ready at a moment's warning to make his appearance without embarrassment to himself or to others. This done, he lay down on a mattress, and wrapped himself up in a quilt, which in summer was always of cotton, in autumn of wool; at the setting-in of winter, he used both; and against very severe cold he protected himself by one of eider-down, of which the part which covered his shoulders was not stuffed with feathers, but padded, or rather wadded closely with layers of wool. Long practice had taught him a very dexterous mode of *nesting* and enswathing himself in the bedclothes. First of all, he sat down on the bedside; then with an agile motion he vaulted obliquely into his lair; next he drew one corner of the bedclothes under his left shoulder, and, passing it below his back, brought it round so as to rest under his right shoulder; fourthly, by a particular *tour d'adresse*, he operated on the other corner in the same way; and finally contrived to roll it round his whole person. Thus swathed like a mummy, or (as I used to tell him) self-involved like the silk-worm in its cocoon, he awaited the approach of sleep, which generally came on immediately. For Kant's health was exquisite; not mere negative health, or the absence of pain, and of irritation, and also of *mal-aise* (either of which, though not "pain," is often worse to bear), but a state of positive pleasurable sensation.

and a conscious possession of all his vital activities. Accordingly, when packed up for the night in the way I have described, he would often ejaculate to himself (as he used to tell us at dinner)—"Is it possible to conceive a human being with more perfect health than myself?" In fact, such was the purity of his life, and such the happy condition of his situation, that no uneasy passion ever arose to excite him, nor care to harass, nor pain to awake him. Even in the severest winter, his sleeping-room was without a fire; only in his latter years he yielded so far to the entreaties of his friends as to allow of a very small one. All nursing or self-indulgence found no quarter with Kant. In fact, five minutes, in the coldest weather, sufficed to supersede the first chill of the bed, by the diffusion of a general glow over his person. If he had any occasion to leave his room in the night-time (for it was always kept dark day and night, summer and winter), he guided himself by a rope, which was duly attached to his bedpost every night, and carried into the adjoining apartment.

Kant never perspired,[1] night or day. Yet it was astonish-

[1] This appears less extraordinary, considering the description of Kant's person, given originally by Reichardt, about eight years after his death. "Kant," says this writer, "was drier than dust" [if so, he was worse than Dr. Dry-*as*-dust, whom else we generally place at the head of his category], "both in body and mind. His person was small; and possibly a more meagre, arid, parched anatomy of a man has not appeared upon this earth. The upper part of his face was grand; forehead lofty and serene, nose elegantly turned, eyes brilliant and penetrating; but expressing powerfully the coarsest sensuality, which in him displayed itself by immoderate addiction to eating and drinking." This last feature of his temperament is, beyond a doubt, here expressed much too harshly. There were but two things on earth—viz. coffee and tobacco—for which Kant had an immoderate liking; and from both of those, under some notion that they were unwholesome, it is notorious that generally he abstained. By the way, Kant's indisposition to perspire, taken in connexion with his exquisite health, may serve perhaps to refute (or, at least, to throw strong doubts upon) a dark fancy, which has been sometimes insinuated as to the misery which desolated the life of Cowper the poet. I knew personally several of Cowper's nearest friends and relatives—one of whom, by the way, a brilliant and accomplished barrister, with a splendid fortune, shot himself under no other impulse than that of pure *ennui*, or *tædium vitæ*, or, in fact, furious rebellion against the odious monotony of life. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum:*

ing how much heat he supported habitually in his study, and, in fact, was not easy if it wanted but one degree of this heat. Seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit was the invariable temperature of this room in which he chiefly lived; and, if it fell below that point, no matter at what season of the year, he had it raised artificially to the usual standard. In the heats of summer he went thinly dressed, and invariably in silk stockings; yet, as even this dress could not always secure him against perspiring when engaged in active exercise, he had a singular remedy in reserve. Retiring to some shady place, he stood still and motionless—with the air and attitude of a person listening, or in suspense—until his usual *aridity* was restored. Even in the most sultry summer night, if the slightest trace of perspiration had sullied his night-dress, he spoke of it with emphasis, as of an accident that perfectly shocked him.

On this occasion, whilst illustrating Kant's notions of the animal economy, it may be as well to add one other particular, which is, that, for fear of obstructing the circulation of the blood, he never would wear garters; yet, as he found it difficult to keep up his stockings without them, he had invented for himself a most elaborate substitute, which I will describe. In a little pocket, somewhat smaller than a watch-pocket, but occupying pretty nearly the same situation as a watch-pocket on each thigh, there was placed a small box, something like a watch-case, but smaller; into this box was introduced a watch-spring in a wheel, round about which wheel was wound an elastic cord, for regulating the force of which there was a separate contrivance. To the two ends of this cord were attached hooks, which hooks were carried through a small aperture in the pockets, and so, passing down the inner and the outer side of the thigh,

this was his outcry. Ah, wherefore should Thursday be such a servile *fac-simile* of Wednesday? This, however, argued a taint of insanity in the family. But, said some people, that taint (presuming it to exist) rested upon the incapacity of perspiring. Cowper could not perspire. This I know to be a fact; and, connecting it with Cowper's constitutional tendency to *mania*, one might fancy the one peculiarity to be the cause of the other. But, on the other hand, here is Kant equally non-perspiring, who never betrayed any tendency to mania.

caught hold of two loops which were fixed on the off side and the near side of each stocking. As might be expected, so complex an apparatus was liable, like the Ptolemaic system of the heavens, to occasional derangements ; however, by good luck, I was able to apply an easy remedy to these disorders, which otherwise threatened to disturb the comfort, and even the serenity, of the great man.

Precisely at five minutes before five o'clock, winter and summer, Lampe, Kant's footman, who had formerly served in the army, marched into his master's room with the air of a sentinel on duty, and cried aloud, in a military tone, "Mr. Professor, the time is come." This summons Kant invariably obeyed without one moment's delay, as a soldier does the word of command—never, under any circumstances, allowing himself a respite, not even under the rare accident of having passed a sleepless night. As the clock struck five, Kant was seated at the breakfast-table, where he drank what he called *one* cup of tea ; and no doubt he thought it such ; but the fact was that, in part from his habit of reverie, and in part also for the purpose of refreshing its warmth, he filled up his cup so often that in general he is supposed to have drunk two, three, or some unknown number. Immediately after, he smoked a pipe of tobacco (the only one which he allowed himself through the entire day), but so rapidly that a pile of reliques partially aglow remained unsmoked. During this operation he thought over his arrangements for the day, as he had done the evening before during twilight. About seven he usually went to his lecture-room, and from that he returned to his writing-table. Precisely at three-quarters before one, he arose from his chair, and called aloud to the cook, "It has struck three-quarters." The meaning of which summons was this :—At dinner, and immediately after taking soup, it was his constant practice to swallow what he called a dram, which consisted either of Hungarian wine, of Rhenish, of a cordial, or (in default of these) of the English compound called *Bishop*. A flask or a jug of this was brought up by the cook on the proclamation of the three-quarters. Kant hurried with it to the dining-room, poured out his *quantum*, left it standing in readiness (covered, however, with paper, to prevent its becoming vapid), and then went back to his

study, where he awaited the arrival of his guests, whom to the latest period of his life he never received otherwise than in full dress.

Thus we come round again to dinner; and the reader has now an accurate picture of Kant's day, according to the usual succession of its changes. To *him* the monotony of this succession was not burdensome, and probably contributed, with the uniformity of his diet, and other habits of the same regularity, to lengthen his life. On this consideration, indeed, he had come to regard his health and his old age as in a great measure the product of his own exertions. He spoke of himself often under the figure of a gymnastic artist, who had continued for nearly fourscore years to support his balance upon the tight-rope of life, without once swerving to the right or to the left. And certainly, in spite of every illness to which his constitutional tendencies had exposed him, he still kept his position in life triumphantly.

This anxious attention to his health accounts for the great interest which he attached to all new discoveries in medicine, or to new ways of theorising on the old ones. As a work of great pretension in both classes, he set the highest value upon the theory of the Scotch physician, Brown, or (as it is usually called, from the Latinised name of its author) the Brunonian Theory.[1] No sooner had Weikard adopted [2] and popularised it in Germany than Kant became familiar with its details. He considered it not only as a great step taken for medicine, but even for the general interests of man, and fancied that in this he saw something analogous to the course which human nature has held in still more important inquiries — viz., first of all, a continual ascent towards the more and more elaborately complex, and then a treading back, on its own steps, towards the simple and elementary. Dr. Beddoes' Essays, also, for producing by art and for curing pulmonary consumption, and the method of Reich for curing fevers, made a powerful impression upon him; which, however,

[1] John Brown, M.D., inventor of the Brunonian System of Medicine, was born 1735 and died 1788.—M.

[2] This theory was afterwards greatly modified in Germany; and, judging from the random glances which I throw on these subjects, I believe that in this recast it still keeps its ground in that country.

declined as those novelties (especially the last) began to sink in credit.[1] As to Dr. Jenner's discovery of vaccination, he was less favourably disposed to it ; he apprehended dangerous consequences from the absorption of a brutal miasma into the human blood, or at least into the lymph ; and at any rate he thought that, as a guarantee against the variolous infection, it required a much longer probation.[2] Groundless as all these views were, it was exceedingly entertaining to hear the fertility of argument and analogy which he brought forward to support them. One of the subjects which occupied him at the latter end of his life was the theory and phenomena of galvanism, which, however, he never satisfactorily mastered. Augustin's book upon this subject was about the last that he read, and his copy still retains on the margin his pencil-marks of doubts, queries, and suggestions.

The infirmities of age now began to steal upon Kant, and

[1] It seems singular, but in fact illustrates perhaps the dominion of chance and accident in distributing so unequally and disproportionately the attention of learned inquirers to important and suggestive novelties, and in part also it proclaims the very imperfect diffusion in those days. through scientific journals, of useful discoveries—that, in the treatment of *fevers*, Kant seems never to have heard of the "*cold-water affusion*" introduced by Dr. Currie ; nor again of the revolutionary principles applied by Dr. Kentish and others to the treatment of *burns*. Dr. Beddoes, who married a sister of Miss Edgeworth's, and was the father of Beddoes the poet (a man of real genius), Kant had heard of, and regarded with much interest. In which there was an unconscious justice. For Dr. Beddoes read extensively amongst German literature in the first decennium of this century, when a few dozens composed the entire body of such students in Great Britain. *He* was, in fact, the first man who uttered the name of Jean Paul Richter in an English book ; as I myself was the first (December 1821) who gave in English a specimen of Richter's style. (It was a chance extract, such as I could command at the time, from his "Flegel-jahre.") Beddoes, meantime, an offset from the school (if school it could be called) of the splendid Erasmus Darwin, Kant knew and admired. But Darwin, the leader in this freethinking school, Kant had not apparently ever heard of.

[2] Kant, in his primary objections to the vaccine inoculation, will be confounded with Dr. Rowley and other anti-vaccine fanatics. But this ought not to hide from us that, in his inclination to regard vaccination as no more than a *temporary* guarantee against small-pox, Kant's sagacity has been largely justified by the event It is now agreed that vaccination, as an *absolute* guarantee against the natural small-pox, ought to be repeated every seven years.

betrayed themselves in more shapes than one. Connected with Kant's prodigious memory for all things having any intellectual bearings, he had from youth laboured under an unusual weakness of this faculty in relation to the common affairs of daily life. Some remarkable instances of this are on record from the period of his childish days; and now, when his second childhood was commencing, this infirmity increased upon him very sensibly. One of the first signs was that he began to repeat the same stories more than once on the same day. Indeed, the decay of his memory was too palpable to escape his own notice; and, in order to provide against it, and to secure himself from all apprehension of inflicting tedium upon his guests, he began to write a syllabus, or list of themes, for each day's conversation, on cards, or the covers of letters, or any chance scrap of paper. But these memoranda accumulated so fast upon him, and were so easily lost, or not forthcoming at the proper moment, that I prevailed on him to substitute a blank-paper book, which still remains, and exhibits some affecting memorials of his own conscious weakness. As often happens, however, in such cases, he had a perfect memory for the remote events of his life, and could repeat with great readiness very long passages from German or Latin poems, especially from the "Æneid," whilst the very words that had been uttered but a moment before dropped away from his remembrance. The past came forward with the distinctness and liveliness of an immediate existence, whilst the present faded away into the obscurity of infinite distance.

Another sign of his mental decay was the weakness with which he now began to theorise. He accounted for everything by electricity. A singular mortality at this time prevailed amongst the cats of Vienna, Basle, Copenhagen, and other places widely remote. Cats being so eminently an electric animal, of course he attributed this epizootic to electricity. During the same period he persuaded himself that a peculiar configuration of clouds prevailed; this he took as a collateral proof of his electrical hypothesis. His own headaches, too, which in all probability were a mere remote effect of old age, and a direct one of an inability[1] to

[1] Mr. Wasianski is probably quite in the wrong here. If the

think as easily and as severely as formerly, he explained upon the same principle. And this was a notion of which his friends were not anxious to disabuse him; because, as something of the same character of weather (and therefore probably the same general distribution of the electric power) is found to prevail for whole cycles of years, entrance upon another cycle held out to him some prospect of relief. A delusion which secured the comforts of hope was the next best thing to an actual system of relief; and a man who, in such circumstances, is cured of his delusion, "*cui demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error*," might reasonably have exclaimed, "*Pol, me occidistis, amici.*"

Possibly the reader may suppose that, in this particular instance of charging his own decays upon the state of the atmosphere, Kant was actuated by the weakness of vanity, or some unwillingness to face the real fact that his powers were decaying. But this was not the case. He was perfectly aware of his own condition; and, as early as 1799, he said, in my presence, to a party of his friends, "Gentlemen, I am old, and weak, and childish, and you must treat me as a child." Or perhaps it may be thought that he shrank from the contemplation of death, which, as apoplexy seemed to be threatened by the pains in his head, might have happened any day. But neither was this the case. He now lived in a continual state of resignation, and prepared for any decree whatever of Providence. "Gentlemen," said he one day to his guests, "I do not fear to die. I assure you, as in the presence of God, that, if, on this very night, suddenly the summons to death were to reach me, I should hear it with calmness, should raise my hands to heaven, and say, Blessed be God! Were it indeed possible that a whisper such as this could reach my ear—Fourscore years thou hast lived, in which time thou hast inflicted much evil upon thy fellow-men, the case would be otherwise." Whosoever has heard Kant speak of his own death will bear witness to the tone of

hindrances which nature presented to the act of thinking were now on the increase, on the other hand, the disposition to think, by his own acknowledgment, was on the wane. The power and the habit altering in proportion, there is no case made out of that disturbed equilibrium to which apparently he would attribute the headaches

earnest sincerity which on such occasions marked his manner and gestures.

A third sign of his decaying faculties was that he now lost all accurate measure of time. One minute, nay, without exaggeration, a much less space of time, stretched out in his apprehension of things to a wearisome duration. Of this I can give one rather amusing instance, which was of constant recurrence. At the beginning of the last year of his life, he fell into a custom of taking, immediately after dinner, a cup of coffee, especially on those days when it happened that I was of his party. And such was the importance he attached to this little pleasure that he would even make a memorandum beforehand, in the blank-paper book I had given him, that on the next day I was to dine with him, and consequently that there was to be coffee. Sometimes it would happen that the interest of conversation carried him past the time at which he felt the craving for it; and this I was not sorry to observe, as I feared that coffee, which he had never been accustomed to,[1] might disturb his rest at night. But, if this

[1] How this happened to be the case in Germany Mr. Wasianski has not explained. Perhaps the English merchants at Konigsberg, being amongst Kant's oldest and most intimate friends, had early familiarised him with the practice of drinking tea, and with other English tastes. However, Jachmann tells us that Kant was extravagantly fond of coffee, but forced himself to abstain from it under a notion that it was very unwholesome; but whether on any other separate ground beyond that of its tendency to defraud men of sleep is not explained. A far better reason for abstaining from coffee than any visionary fancies about its insalubrity rests in England upon the villainous mode of its preparation. In respect to cookery, and every conceivable culinary process, the English (and in exaggerated degree the Scotch) are the most uncultured of the human race. It was an old saying of a sarcastic Frenchman on visiting that barbarous city of London (foremost upon earth for many great qualities, but the most barbarous upon earth, except Edinburgh and Glasgow, for all culinary arts)—"Behold!" said the Frenchman, "a land where they have sixty religions" (alluding to the numerous subdivisions of Protestant dissent) "and only one sauce." Now, this was a fib: for, wretched as England is and ever was in this respect, she could certainly count twenty-five. But, meantime, what would the Frenchman have thought of Scotland, that absolutely has not one? Even to this day, the horrible fish called *haddy* throughout Scotland is eaten without any sauce whatever; by which means its atrocities are made ten times more distinguishably atrocious.

did not happen, then commenced a scene of some interest. Coffee must be brought "upon the spot" (a word he had constantly in his mouth during his latter days) "in a moment." And the expressions of his impatience, though from old habit still gentle, were so lively, and had so much of infantine *naiveté* about them, that none of us could forbear smiling. Knowing what would happen, I had taken care that all the preparations should be made beforehand: the coffee was ground; the water was boiling; and the very moment the word was given, his servant shot in like an arrow, and plunged the coffee into the water. All that remained, therefore, was to give it time to boil up. But this trifling delay seemed unendurable to Kant. All consolations were thrown away upon him: vary the formula as we might, he was never at a loss for a reply. If it was said, "Dear professor, the coffee will be brought up in a moment."—"*Will* be!" he would say, "but there's the rub, that it only *will* be:

'Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest'"

If another cried out, "The coffee is coming immediately," "Yes," he would retort, "and so is the next hour: and, by the way, it's about that length of time that I have waited for it." Then he would collect himself with a stoical air, and say, "Well, one can die after all: it is but dying; and in the next world, thank God! there is no drinking of coffee, and consequently no waiting for it." Sometimes he would rise from his chair, open the door, and cry out, with a feeble querulousness, as if appealing to the last arrears of humanity amongst his fellow-creatures, "Coffee! coffee!" And, when at length he heard the servant's steps upon the stairs, he would turn round to us, and, as joyfully as ever sailor from the mast-head, he would call out, "Land, land! my dear friends, I see land."

This general decline in Kant's powers, active and passive, gradually brought about a revolution in his habits of life. Hitherto, as I have already mentioned, he went to bed at ten, and rose a little before five. The latter practice he still observed, but not the other. In 1802 he retired as early as nine, and afterwards still earlier. He found himself so much

refreshed by this addition to his rest that at first he was disposed to utter a εὕρηκα, as over some great discovery in the art of restoring exhausted nature: but afterwards, on pushing it still farther, he did not find the success answer his expectations. His walks he now limited to a few turns in the king's gardens, which were at no great distance from his own house. In order to walk more firmly, he adopted a peculiar method of stepping: he carried his foot to the ground, not forward and obliquely, but perpendicularly, and with a kind of stamp, so as to secure a larger basis, by setting down the entire sole at once. Notwithstanding this precaution, upon one occasion he fell in the street. He was quite unable to raise himself; and two young ladies, who saw the accident, ran to his assistance. With his usual graciousness of manner he thanked them fervently for their assistance, and presented one of them with a rose which he happened to have in his hand. This lady was not personally known to Kant; but she was greatly delighted with his little present, and still keeps the rose as a frail memorial of her transitory interview with the great philosopher.

This accident, as I have reason to think, was the cause of his henceforth renouncing exercise altogether. All labours, even that of reading, were now performed slowly and with manifest effort; and those which cost him any considerable bodily exertion became very exhausting. His feet refused to do their office more and more; he fell continually, both when moving across the room, and even when standing still: yet he seldom suffered from these falls; and he constantly laughed at them, maintaining that it was impossible he could hurt himself, from the extreme lightness of his person, which was indeed by this time the merest shadow of a man. Very often, especially in the morning, he dropped asleep in his chair from pure weariness and exhaustion: on these occasions he was apt to fall upon the floor, from which he was unable to raise himself up, until accident brought one of his servants or his friends into the room. Afterwards these falls were prevented, by substituting a chair with circular supports, that met and clasped in front.

These unseasonable dozings exposed him to another danger. He fell repeatedly, whilst reading, with his head

into the candles; a cotton nightcap which he wore was instantly in a blaze, and flaming about his head. Whenever this happened, Kant behaved with great presence of mind. Disregarding the pain, he seized the blazing cap, drew it from his head, laid it quietly on the floor, and trod out the flames with his feet. Yet, as this last act brought his dressing-gown into a dangerous neighbourhood to the flames, I changed the form of his cap, persuaded him to arrange the candles differently, and had a large vase of water placed constantly by his side; and in this way I applied a remedy to a danger which would else probably have proved fatal to him.

From the sallies of impatience which I have described in the case of the coffee, there was reason to fear that, with the increasing infirmities of Kant, would grow up a general waywardness and obstinacy of temper. For my own sake, therefore, and not less for his, I now laid down one rule for my future conduct in his house: which was that I would on no occasion allow my reverence for him to interfere with the firmest expression of what seemed the just opinion on subjects relating to his own health; and, in cases of great importance, that I would make no compromise with his particular humours, but insist, not only on my view of the case, but also on the practical adoption of my views; or, if this were refused to me, that I would take my departure at once, and not be made responsible for the comfort of a person whom I had no power to influence. And this behaviour on my part it was that won Kant's confidence; for there was nothing which disgusted him so much as any approach to sycophancy or to compliances of timidity. As his imbecility increased, he became daily more liable to mental delusions; and, in particular, he fell into many fantastic notions about the conduct of his servants, and, consequently, sometimes into a peevish mode of treating them. Upon these occasions I generally observed a deep silence. But now and then he would ask me for my opinion; and, when this happened, I did not scruple to say, "Ingenuously, then, Mr. Professor, I think that you are in the wrong."—"You think so?" he would reply calmly, at the same time

asking for my reasons, which he would listen to with great patience and candour. Indeed, it was evident that the firmest opposition, so long as it rested upon assignable grounds and principles, won upon his regard; whilst his own nobleness of character still moved him to habitual contempt for timorous and partial acquiescence in his opinions, even when his infirmities made him most anxious for such acquiescence.

Earlier in life Kant had been little used to contradiction. His superb understanding, his brilliancy in conversation, founded in part upon his ready and sometimes rather caustic wit, and in part upon his prodigious command of knowledge —the air of noble self-confidence which the consciousness of these advantages impressed upon his manners—and the general acquaintance with the severe purity of his life—all combined to give him a station of superiority to others, which generally secured him from open contradiction. And, if it sometimes happened that he met a noisy and intemperate opposition, supported by any pretences to wit, he usually withdrew himself calmly from that sort of unprofitable altercation, by contriving to give such a turn to the conversation as won the general favour of the company to himself, and impressed silence, or modesty at least, upon the boldest disputant. From a person so little familiar with opposition it could scarcely have been anticipated that he should daily surrender his wishes to mine, if not without discussion, yet always without displeasure. So, however, it was. No habit, of whatever long standing, could be objected to as injurious to his health but he would generally renounce it. And he had this excellent custom in such cases, that either he would resolutely and at once decide for his own opinion, or, if he professed to follow his friend's, he would follow it sincerely, and not try it unfairly by trying it imperfectly. Any plan, however trifling, which he had once consented to adopt on the suggestion of another, was never afterwards defeated or embarrassed by unseasonable interposition from his own humours. And thus the very period of his decay drew forth so many fresh expressions of his character in its amiable or noble features as daily increased my affection and reverence for his person.

Having mentioned his servants, I shall here take occasion

to give some account of his man-servant Lampe. It was a great misfortune for Kant, in his old age and infirmities, that this man also became old, and subject to a different sort of infirmities. This Lampe had originally served in the Prussian army; on quitting which he entered the service of Kant. In this situation he had lived about forty years; and, though always dull and stupid, had, in the early part of this period, discharged his duties with tolerable fidelity. But latterly, presuming upon his own indispensableness from his perfect knowledge of all the domestic arrangements and upon his master's weakness, he had fallen into great irregularities and habitual neglects. Kant had been obliged, therefore, of late to threaten repeatedly that he would discharge him. I, who knew that Kant, though one of the kindest-hearted men, was also one of the firmest, foresaw that this discharge, once given, would be irrevocable: for the word of Kant was as sacred as other men's oaths. Consequently, upon every opportunity I remonstrated with Lampe on the folly of his conduct; and his wife joined me on these occasions. Indeed, it was high time that a change should be made in some quarter; for it now became dangerous to leave Kant, who was constantly falling from weakness, to the care of an old ruffian, who was himself apt to fall from intoxication. The fact was that, from the moment I undertook the management of Kant's affairs, Lampe saw there was an end to his old system of abusing his master's confidence in pecuniary affairs, and to all the other advantages which he took of his helpless situation. This made him desperate, and he behaved worse and worse; until one morning, in January 1802, Kant told me that, humiliating as he felt such a confession, the fact was that Lampe had just treated him in a way which he was ashamed to repeat. I was too much shocked to distress him by inquiring into the particulars. But the result was that Kant now insisted, temperately but firmly, on Lampe's dismissal. Accordingly, a new servant, named Kaufmann, was immediately engaged; and on the following day Lampe was discharged, with a handsome pension for life.

Here I must mention a little circumstance which does honour to Kant's benevolence. In his last will, on the

assumption that Lampe would continue with him to his death, he had made a very liberal provision for him; but upon this new arrangement of the pension, which was to take effect immediately, it became necessary to revoke that part of his will; which he did in a separate codicil, that began thus:—"In consequence of the misbehaviour of my servant Lampe, I think fit," &c. But soon after, considering that such a solemn and deliberate record of Lampe's misconduct might be seriously injurious to his interests, he cancelled the passage, and expressed it in such a way that no trace remained behind of his just displeasure. And his benign nature was gratified with knowing that, this one sentence being blotted out, there remained no other in all his numerous writings, published or confidential, which spoke the language of anger, or could leave any ground for doubting that he died in charity with all the world. Upon Lampe's calling to demand a written character, he was, however, a good deal embarrassed; Kant's well-known reverence for truth, so stern and inexorable, being, in this instance, armed against the first impulses of his kindness. Long and anxiously he sat, with the certificate lying before him, debating how he should fill up the blanks. I was present; but in such a matter I did not presume to suggest any advice. At last he took his pen, and filled up the blank as follows:—"—— has served me long and faithfully"—(for Kant was not aware that he had robbed him)—"but did not display those particular qualifications which fitted him for waiting on an old and infirm man like myself."

This scene of disturbance over, which to Kant, a lover of peace and tranquillity, caused a shock that gladly he would have been spared, it was fortunate that no other of that nature occurred during the rest of his life. Kaufmann, the successor of Lampe, turned out to be a respectable and upright man, and soon conceived a great attachment to his master. Henceforth things wore a new face in Kant's family: by the removal of one of the belligerents, peace was once more restored amongst his servants; for hitherto there had been eternal wars between Lampe and the cook. Sometimes it was Lampe that carried a war of aggression into the cook's territory of the kitchen; sometimes it was the cook that revenged these insults by sallying out upon Lampe in the

neutral ground of the hall, or invaded him even in his own sanctuary of the butler's pantry. The uproars were everlasting; and thus far it was fortunate for the peace of the philosopher that his hearing had begun to fail; by which means he was spared many an exhibition of hateful passions and ruffian violence that annoyed his guests and friends. But now all things had changed: deep silence reigned in the pantry; the kitchen rang no more with martial alarums; and the hall was unvexed with skirmish or pursuit. Yet it may be readily supposed that to Kant, at the age of seventy-eight, changes, even for the better, were not welcome: so intense had been the uniformity of his life and habits that the least innovation in the arrangement of articles as trifling as a penknife or a pair of scissors disturbed him; and not merely if they were pushed two or three inches out of their customary position, but even if they were laid a little awry; and, as to larger objects, such as chairs, &c., any dislocation of their usual arrangement, any transposition, or addition to their number, perfectly confounded him; and his eye appeared restlessly to haunt the seat of the mal-arrangement until the ancient order was restored. With such habits the reader may conceive how distressing it must have been to him, at this period of decaying powers, to adapt himself to a new servant, a new voice, a new step, &c.

Aware of this, I had, on the day before he entered upon his duties, written down for the new servant upon a sheet of paper the entire routine of Kant's daily life, down to the minutest and most trivial circumstances; all which he mastered with the greatest rapidity. To make sure, however, we went through a rehearsal of the whole ritual; he performing the manœuvres, I looking on and giving the word. Still I felt uneasy at the idea of his being left entirely to his own discretion on his first *début* in good earnest, and therefore I made a point of attending on this important day; and, in the few instances where the new recruit missed the accurate manœuvre, a glance or a nod from me easily made him comprehend his failure.

One part only there was of the daily ceremonial where all of us were at a loss, since it was that part which no mortal eyes had ever witnessed but those of Lampe: this was break-

fast. However, that we might do all in our power, I myself attended at four o'clock in the morning. The day happened, as I remember, to be the first of February 1802. Precisely at five Kant made his appearance; and nothing could equal his astonishment on finding me in the room. Fresh from the confusion of dreaming, and bewildered alike by the sight of his new servant, by Lampe's absence, and by my presence, he could with difficulty be made to comprehend the purpose of my visit. A friend in need is a friend indeed; and we would now have given any money to that learned Theban who could have instructed us in the arrangement of the breakfast-table. But this was a mystery revealed to none but Lampe. At length Kant took this task upon himself; and apparently all was now settled to his satisfaction. Yet still it struck me that he was under some embarrassment or constraint. Upon this I said that, with his permission, I would take a cup of tea, and afterwards smoke a pipe with him. He accepted my offer with his usual courteous demeanour; but seemed unable to familiarise himself with the novelty of his situation. I was at this time sitting directly opposite to him; and at last he frankly told me, but with the kindest and most apologetic air, that he was really under the necessity of begging that I would sit out of his sight; for that, having sat alone at the breakfast-table for considerably more than half-a-century, he could not abruptly adapt his mind to a change in this respect, and he found his thoughts very sensibly distracted. I did as he desired; the servant retired into an anteroom, where he waited within call; and Kant recovered his wonted composure. Just the same scene passed over again, when I called at the same hour on a fine summer morning some months after.

Henceforth all went right: or, if occasionally some little mistake occurred, Kant showed himself very considerate and indulgent, and would remark spontaneously that a new servant could not be expected to know all his ways and humours. In one respect, however, this new man adapted himself to Kant's scholarlike taste in a way which Lampe was incapable of doing. Kant was somewhat fastidious in matters of pronunciation; and Kaufmann had a great facility

in catching the true sound of Latin words, the titles of books, and the names or designations of Kant's friends: not one of which accomplishments could Lampe, the most insufferable of blockheads, ever attain to. In particular, I have been told by Kant's old friends that for the space of thirty-eight years, during which he had been in the habit of reading the newspaper published by Hartung, Lampe delivered it with the same identical blunder on every day of publication:—"Mr. Professor, here is Hart*mann's* journal." Upon which Kant would reply, "Eh! what?—What's that you say? Hartmann's journal? I tell you, it is not Hartmann's, but Hartung's: now, repeat after me—not Hartmann's, but Hartung's." Then Lampe, looking sulky, and drawing himself up with the stiff air of a soldier on guard, and in the very same monotonous tone with which he had been used to sing out his challenge of *Who goes there?* would roar, "not Hartmann's but Hartung's."—"Now again!" Kant would say: on which again Lampe roared, "Not Hartmann's, but Hartung's."—"Now a third time," cried Kant: on which for a third time the unhappy Lampe would howl out, in truculent despair, "Not Hartmann's, but Hartung's." And this whimsical scene of parade duty was continually repeated: duly as the day of publication came round (viz. twice a-week), the irreclaimable old dunce was put through the same manœuvres, which were as invariably followed by the same blunder on the next. So that this incorrigible blockhead must have repeated the same unvarying blunder for a hundred and four times annually (*i.e.* twice a-week), multiplied into thirty-eight, as the number of years. For more than one-half of man's normal life under the scriptural allowance, had this never-enough-to-be-admired old donkey foundered punctually on the same identical rock. In spite, however, of this advantage in the new servant, and a general superiority to his predecessor, Kant's nature was too kind, too good, and too indulgent to all people's infirmities but his own, not to miss the voice and the "old familiar face" that he had been accustomed to for forty years. And I met with what struck me as an affecting instance of Kant's yearning after his old good-for-nothing servant in his memorandum-book: other people record what they wished to remember; but Kant had here

recorded what he was to forget. "Mem.—February 1802, the name of Lampe must now be remembered no more."

In the spring of this year, 1802, I advised Kant to take the air. It was very long since he had been out-of-doors,[1] and walking was now out of the question. But I thought that perhaps the motion of a carriage and the air might have a chance of reviving him. On the power of vernal sights and sounds I did not much rely; for these had long ceased to affect him. Of all the changes that spring carries with it, there was one only that now interested Kant; and he longed for it with an eagerness and intensity of expectation that it became almost painful to witness: this was the return of a little bird (sparrow was it, or robin-redbreast?) that sang in his garden, and before his window. This bird, either the same, or one of a younger generation, had sung for years in the same situation; and Kant grew uneasy when the cold weather, lasting longer than usual, retarded its return. Like Lord Bacon, indeed, he had a child-like love for birds in general; and in particular he took pains to encourage the sparrows to build above the windows of his study; and, when this happened (as it often did, from the deep silence which prevailed in the room), he watched their proceedings with the delight and the tenderness which others give to a human interest. To return to the point I was speaking of, Kant was at first very unwilling to adopt my proposal of going abroad. "I shall sink down in the carriage," said he, "and fall together like a heap of old rags." But I persisted with a gentle importunity in urging him to the attempt, assuring him that we would return immediately if he found the effort too much for him. Accordingly, upon a tolerably warm day of early[2] summer, I and an old friend of Kant's accom-

[1] Wasianski here returns thanks to some unknown person, who, having observed that Kant in his latter walks took pleasure in leaning against a particular wall to view the prospect, had caused a seat to be fixed at that point for his use.

[2] Mr. Wasianski says, *late* in summer; but, as he elsewhere describes by the same expression as "late in summer" a day which was confessedly *before* the longest day, and as the multitude of birds which continued to sing will not allow us to suppose that the summer could be very far advanced, I have translated accordingly.

panied him to a little place which I rented in the country. As we drove through the streets, Kant was delighted to find that he could sit upright, and bear the motion of the carriage, and seemed to draw youthful pleasure from the sight of the towers and other public buildings, which he had not seen for years. We reached the place of our destination in high spirits. Kant drank a cup of coffee, and attempted to smoke a little. After this, he sat and sunned himself, listening with delight to the carolling of birds, which congregated in great numbers about this spot. He distinguished every bird by its song, and called it by its right name. After staying about half-an-hour, we set off on our homeward journey, Kant still cheerful, but apparently satiated with his day's enjoyment.

I had on this occasion purposely avoided taking him to any public gardens, that I might not disturb his pleasure by exposing him to the distressing gaze of public curiosity. However, it became known in Konigsberg that Kant had gone out; and accordingly, as the carriage moved through the streets which led homewards, there was a general rush from all quarters in that direction; and, when we turned into the street where the house stood, we found it already choked up with people. As we slowly drew up to the door, a lane was formed in the crowd, through which Kant was led, I and my friend supporting him on our arms. Looking at the crowd, I observed the faces of many persons of rank and distinguished strangers, some of whom now saw Kant for the first time, and many of them for the last.

As the winter of 1802-3 approached, he complained more than ever of an affection of the stomach, which no medical man had been able to mitigate, or even to explain. The winter passed over in a complaining way; he was weary of life, and longed for the hour of dismission. "I can be of service to the world no more," said he, "and am a burden to myself." Often I endeavoured to cheer him by the anticipation of excursions that we might make together when summer came again. On these he calculated with so much earnestness that he had made a regular scale or classification of them—1. Airings; 2. Journeys; 3. Travels. And nothing could equal the yearning impatience expressed for the coming of spring and summer, not so much for their own

peculiar attractions as because they were the seasons for travelling. In his memorandum-book he made this note:—"The three summer months are June, July, and August"; meaning that they were the three months for travelling. And in conversation he expressed the feverish strength of his wishes so plaintively and affectingly that everybody was drawn into powerful sympathy with him, and wished for some magical means of antedating the course of the seasons.

During this winter his bedroom was often warmed. *That* was the room in which he kept his little collection of books, somewhere about four hundred and fifty volumes, chiefly presentation-copies from the authors. It may seem strange that Kant, who read so extensively, should have no larger library; but he had less need of one than most scholars, having in his earlier years been librarian at the Royal Library of the Castle, and since then having enjoyed from the liberality of Hartknoch, his publisher (who, in his turn, had profited by the liberal terms on which Kant had made over to him the copyright of his own works), the first sight of every new book that appeared.

At the close of this winter (that is, 1803) Kant first began to complain of unpleasant dreams, sometimes of very terrific ones, which awakened him in great agitation. Oftentimes melodies, which he had heard in earliest youth sung in the streets of Konigsberg, resounded painfully in his ears, and dwelt upon them in a way from which no efforts of abstraction could release him. These kept him awake to unseasonable hours; and sometimes, when after long watching he had fallen asleep, however profound his sleep might be, it was suddenly broken up by terrific dreams, which alarmed him beyond description. Almost every night the bell-rope, which communicated with a bell in the room above his own, where his servant slept, was pulled violently, and with the utmost agitation. No matter how fast the servant might hurry down, he was almost always too late, and was pretty sure to find his master out of bed, and often making his way in terror to some other part of the house. The weakness of his feet exposed him to such dreadful falls on these occasions that at length (but with much difficulty) I

persuaded him to let his servant sleep in the same room with himself.

The morbid affection of the stomach, out of which the dreadful dreams arose, began now to be more and more distressing; and he tried various applications, which he had formerly been loud in condemning, such as a few drops of rum upon a piece of sugar, naphtha,[1] &c. But all these were only palliatives; for his advanced age precluded the hope of a radical cure. His dreams became continually more appalling: single scenes, or passages in these dreams, were sufficient to compose the whole course of mighty tragedies, the impression from which was so profound as to stretch far into his waking hours. Amongst other phantasmata more shocking and indescribable, his dreams constantly represented to him the forms of murderers advancing to his bedside; and so agitated was he by the awful trains of phantoms that swept past him nightly that in the first confusion of awaking he generally mistook his servant, who was hurrying to his assistance, for a murderer. In the daytime we often conversed upon these shadowy illusions; and Kant, with his usual spirit of stoical contempt for nervous weakness of every sort, laughed at them; and, to fortify his own resolution to contend against them, he wrote down in his memorandum-book, "No surrender now to panics of darkness." At my suggestion, however, he now burned a light in his chamber, so placed as that the rays might be shaded from his face. At first he was very averse to this, though gradually he became reconciled to it. But that he could bear it at all was to me an expression of the great revolution accomplished by this terrific agency of his dreams. Heretofore, darkness and utter silence were the two pillars on which his sleep rested: no step must approach his room; and, as to light, if he saw but a moonbeam penetrating a crevice of the shutters, it made him unhappy; and, in fact, the windows of his bedchamber were barricaded night and day. But now darkness was a terror to him, and silence an oppression. In addition to his lamp, therefore, he had now a repeater in his room.

[1] For Kant's particular complaint, as described by other biographers, a quarter of a grain of opium, every eight hours, would have been the best remedy, perhaps a perfect remedy.

The sound was at first too loud, but means were taken to muffle the hammer; after which both the ticking and the striking become companionable sounds to him.

At this time (spring of 1803) his appetite began to fail, which I thought no good sign. Many persons insist that Kant was in the habit of eating too much for health.[1] I, however, cannot assent to this opinion; for he ate but once a-day, and drank no beer. Of this liquor (I mean the strong black beer) he was, indeed, the most determined enemy. If ever a man died prematurely, Kant would say, "He has been drinking beer, I presume." Or, if another were indisposed, you might be sure he would ask, "But does he drink beer?" And, according to the answer on this point, he regulated his anticipations for the patient. Strong beer, in short, he uniformly maintained to be a slow poison. Voltaire, by the way, had said to a young physician who denounced coffee under the same bad name of a "slow poison," "You're right there, my friend: slow it is, and horribly slow, for I have been drinking it these seventy years, and it has not killed me yet"; but this was an

[1] Who these worthy people were that criticised Kant's eating is not mentioned. They could have had no opportunity for exercising their abilities on this question, except as hosts, guests, or fellow-guests; and, in any of those characters, a gentleman, one would suppose, must feel himself degraded by directing his attention to a point of that nature. However, the merits of the case stand thus between the parties: Kant, it is agreed by all his biographers, ate only once a-day; for, as to his breakfast, it was nothing more than a very weak infusion of tea (*vide* "Jachmann's Letters," p. 163), with no bread or eatable of any kind. Now, his critics, it is believed, ate their way, from "morn to dewy eve," through the following course of meals: 1. Breakfast early in the morning; 2. Breakfast *à la fourchette* about ten A.M.; 3. Dinner at one or two; 4. Vesper Brod; 5. Abend Brod —all which does really seem a very fair allowance for a man who means to lecture upon abstinence at night. But I shall cut this matter short by stating one plain fact. There were two things, and no more, for which Kant had an inordinate craving during his whole life: these were tobacco and coffee; and from both these he abstained almost altogether, merely under a sense of duty, resting probably upon erroneous grounds. Of the first he allowed himself a very small quantity (and everybody knows that temperance is a more difficult virtue than abstinence), of the other none at all, until the labours of his life were accomplished.

answer which, in the case of beer, Kant would not allow of.

On the 22d of April 1803, his birth-day, the last which he lived to see, was celebrated in a full assembly of his friends. This festival he had long looked forward to with great expectation, and delighted even to hear the progress made in the preparations for it. But, when the day came, the over-excitement and tension of expectation seemed to have defeated itself. He tried to appear happy; but the bustle of a numerous company confounded and distressed him, and his spirits were manifestly forced.[1] He seemed first to revive into any real sense of pleasure at night, when the company had departed, and he was undressing in his study. He then talked with much pleasure about the presents which, as usual, would be made to his servants on this occasion; for Kant was never happy himself unless he saw all around him happy. He was a great maker of presents; but at the same time he had no toleration for the studied theatrical effect, the accompaniment of formal congratulations, and the sentimental pathos, with which birthday presents are made in Germany.[2] In all this his masculine taste gave him a sense of something *fade* and ludicrous.

[1] The English reader will here be reminded of Wordsworth's exquisite stanza:—

> "But we are pressed by heavy laws;
> And often, glad no more,
> We wear a *face* of joy, because
> We have been glad of yore."

[2] In this, as in many other things, the taste of Kant was entirely English and Roman; as, on the other hand, some eminent Englishmen, I am sorry to say, have, on this very point, shown the effeminacy and *falsetto* taste of the Germans. In particular, Coleridge, describing, in "The Friend," the custom amongst German children of making presents to their parents on Christmas Eve (a custom which he unaccountably supposes peculiar to Ratzeburg), represents the mother as "weeping aloud for joy," the old idiot of a father with "tears running down his face," &c. &c., and all for what? For a snuff-box, a pencil-case, or some article of jewellery. Now, we English agree with Kant on such maudlin display of stage sentimentality, and are prone to suspect that papa's tears are the product of rum-punch. Tenderness let us have by all means, and the deepest you can imagine, but upon proportionate occasions, and with causes fitted to sustain its dignity.

The summer of 1803 was now come, and, visiting Kant one day, I was thunderstruck to hear him direct me, in the most serious tone, to provide the funds necessary for an extensive foreign tour. I made no opposition, but asked his reasons for such a plan ; he alleged the miserable sensations he had in his stomach, which were no longer endurable. Knowing what power over Kant a quotation from a Roman poet had always possessed, I simply replied, "Post equitem sedet atra cura" ; and for the present he said no more. But the touching and pathetic earnestness with which he was continually ejaculating prayers for warmer weather made it doubtful to me whether his wishes on this point ought not, partially at least, to be gratified ; and I therefore proposed to him a little excursion to the cottage we had visited the year before. "Anywhere," said he, "no matter whither, provided it be far enough." Towards the latter end of June, therefore, we executed this scheme. On getting into the carriage, the order of the day with Kant was, "Distance, distance. Only let us go far enough," said he : but scarcely had we reached the city-gates before the journey seemed already to have lasted too long. On reaching the cottage, we found coffee waiting for us ; but he would scarcely allow himself time for drinking it before he ordered the carriage to the door ; and the journey back seemed insupportably long to him, though it was performed in something less than twenty minutes. "Is this never to have an end ?" was his continual exclamation ; and great was his joy when he found himself once more in his study, undressed, and in bed. And for this night he slept in peace, and once again was liberated from the persecution of dreams.

Soon after he began again to talk of journeys, of travels in remote countries, &c., and, in consequence, we repeated our former excursion several times ; and, though the circumstances were pretty nearly the same on every occasion, always terminating in disappointment as to the immediate pleasure anticipated, yet, undoubtedly, they were, on the whole, salutary to his spirits. In particular, the cottage itself, standing under the shelter of tall alders, with a valley silent and solitary stretched beneath it, through which a little brook meandered, broken by a waterfall, whose pealing

sound dwelt pleasantly on the ear, sometimes on a quiet sunny day gave a lively delight to Kant: and once, under accidental circumstances of summer-clouds and sunlights, the little pastoral landscape suddenly awakened a lively remembrance, which had been long laid asleep, of a heavenly summer morning in youth which he had passed in a bower upon the banks of a rivulet that ran through the grounds of a dear and early friend, Gen. Von Lossow. The strength of the impression was such that he seemed actually to be living over that morning again, thinking as he then thought, and conversing with beloved friends that were no more.

His very last excursion was in August of this year (1803), not to my cottage, but to the garden of a friend. On this particular day he manifested great impatience. It had been arranged that he was to meet an old friend at the gardens; and I, with two other gentlemen, attended him. It happened that *our* party arrived first; and thus we had to wait; but only for a few minutes. Such, however, was Kant's weakness, and total loss of power to estimate the duration of time, that, after waiting a few moments, several hours (he fancied) must have elapsed, so that his friend could not be expected. Under this impression he came away, and in great discomposure of mind. And so ended Kant's travelling in this world.

In the beginning of autumn the sight of his right eye began to fail him; the left he had long lost the use of. This earliest of his losses it is noticeable that he had discovered by mere accident. Sitting down one day to rest himself in the course of a walk, it occurred to him that he would try the comparative strength of his eyes; but, on taking out a newspaper which he had in his pocket, he was surprised to find that with his left eye he could not distinguish a letter. In earlier life he had two remarkable affections of the eyes: once, on returning from a walk, he saw objects double for a long space of time; and twice he became stone-blind. Whether these accidents are to be considered as uncommon I leave to the decision of oculists. Certain it is, they gave very little disturbance to Kant; who, until old age had lowered the tone of his powers, lived in a constant

state of stoical preparation for the worst that could befall him. I was now shocked to think of the degree in which his burdensome sense of dependence would be aggravated if he should totally lose the power of sight. Even as it was he read and wrote with great difficulty: in fact, his writing was little better than that which most people can produce as a trial of skill with their eyes shut. From old habits of solitary study, he had no pleasure in hearing others read to him; and he daily distressed me by the pathetic earnestness of his entreaties that I would have a reading-glass devised for him. Whatever my own optical skill could suggest I tried, and the best opticians were sent for, to bring their glasses, and take his directions for altering them; but all was to no purpose.

In this last year of his life, Kant very unwillingly received the visits of strangers; and, unless under particular circumstances, wholly declined them. Yet, when travellers had come a very great way out of their road to see him, I confess that I was at a loss how to conduct myself. To have refused too pertinaciously could not but give me the air of wishing to make myself of importance. And I must acknowledge that, amongst some few instances of importunity and coarse expressions of low-bred curiosity, I witnessed, pretty generally in all ranks, a most delicate sensibility to the condition of the aged recluse. On sending in their cards, they would usually accompany them by some message expressive of their unwillingness to gratify their wish to see him at any risk of distressing him. The fact was that such visits *did* distress him much; for he felt it a degradation to be exhibited in his helpless state, when he was aware of his own incapacity to meet properly the attention that was paid to him. Some, however, were admitted,[1] according to the circumstances of the case and the accidental state of Kant's spirits at the moment. Amongst these, I remember that we were particularly pleased with M. Otto, the same who signed the treaty of peace between France and England with the present[2]

[1] To whom it appears that Kant would generally reply, upon their expressing the pleasure it gave them to see him, "In me you behold a poor, superannuated, worn-out old man."

[2] "*Present*":—*i.e.*, that Lord Liverpool who was struck by paralysis

Lord Liverpool (then Lord Hawkesbury). A young Russian also rises to my recollection at this moment, from the excessive (and I think unaffected) enthusiasm which he displayed. On being introduced to Kant, he advanced hastily, took both his hands, and kissed them. Kant, who, from living so much amongst his English friends, had a good deal of the English dignified reserve about him, and hated anything like *scenes*, appeared to shrink a little from this mode of salutation, and was rather embarrassed. However, the young man's manner, I believe, was not at all beyond his genuine feelings; for next day he called again, made some inquiries about Kant's health, was very anxious to know whether his old age was burdensome to him, and, above all things, entreated for some little memorial of the great man to carry away with him. By accident the servant had found a small cancelled fragment of the original MS. of Kant's "Anthropologie": this, with my sanction, he gave to the Russian; who received it with rapture, kissed it, and then gave to the servant in return the only dollar he had about him, and, thinking that not enough, actually pulled off his coat and waistcoat, and forced them upon the man. Kant, whose native simplicity of character very much indisposed him to sympathy with any extravagances of feeling, could not, however, forbear smiling good-humouredly, on being made acquainted with this instance of *naiveté* and enthusiasm in his young admirer.

I now come to an event in Kant's life which ushered in its closing stage. On the 8th of October 1803, for the first time since his youth, he was seriously ill. When a student at the university, he had once suffered from an ague, which, however, gave way to pedestrian exercise; and in later years he had endured some pain from a contusion on his head; but, with these two exceptions (if they can be considered such), he had never (properly speaking) been ill. At present the cause of his illness was this: his appetite had latterly been irregular, or rather I should say depraved; and he no longer took pleasure in anything but bread-and-butter and English

when Prime Minister to Geo. IV, and has now for nearly thirty years been described as *the late* Lord Liverpool.

cheese.[1] On the 7th of October, at dinner, he ate little else, in spite of everything that I and another friend then dining with him could urge to dissuade him. For the first time I fancied that he seemed displeased with my importunity, as though I were overstepping the just line of my duties. He insisted that the cheese never had done him any harm, nor would now. I had no course left me but to hold my tongue ; and he did as he pleased. The consequence was what might have been anticipated—a restless night, succeeded by a day of memorable illness. The next morning all went on as usual, till nine o'clock, when Kant, who was then leaning on his sister's arm, suddenly fell senseless to the ground. A messenger was immediately despatched for me ; and I hurried down to his house, where I found him lying on his bed, which had now been removed into his study, speechless and insensible. I had already summoned his physician ; but, before he arrived, nature put forth efforts which brought Kant a little to himself. In about an hour he opened his eyes, and continued to mutter unintelligibly until towards the evening, when he rallied a little, and began to talk rationally. For the first time in his life, he was now, for a few days, confined to his bed, and ate nothing. On the 12th of October he again took some refreshment, and would have had his favourite food ; but I was now resolved, at any risk of his displeasure, to oppose him firmly. I therefore stated to him the whole consequences of his last indulgence, of all which he manifestly had no recollection. He listened to what I said very attentively, and calmly expressed his conviction that I was perfectly in the wrong ; but for the present he submitted. However, some days after, I found

[1] Mr. W. here falls into the ordinary mistake of confounding the cause and the occasion, and would leave the impression that Kant (who from his youth up had been a model of temperance) died of sensual indulgence. The cause of Kant's death was clearly the general decay of the vital powers, and in particular the atony of the digestive organs, which must soon have destroyed him under any care or abstinence whatever. This was the cause. The accidental occasion which made the cause operative on the 7th of October might or might not be what Mr. W. says. But, in Kant's burdensome state of existence, it could not be a question of much importance whether his illness were to date from a 7th of October or from a 7th of November.

that he had been offering a florin for a little bread-and-cheese, and then a dollar, and even more. Being again refused, he complained heavily; but gradually he weaned himself from asking for it, though at times he betrayed involuntarily how much he desired it.

On the 13th of October his usual dinner parties were resumed, and he was considered convalescent; but it was seldom indeed that he recovered the tone of tranquil spirits which he had preserved until his late attack. Hitherto he had always loved to prolong this meal, the only one he took —or, as he expressed it in classical phrase, "cœnam *ducere*"; but now it was difficult to hurry it over fast enough for his wishes. From dinner, which terminated about two o'clock, he went straight to bed, and at intervals fell into slumbers; from which, however, he was regularly roused up by phantasmata or terrific dreams. At seven in the evening came on duly a period of great distress, which lasted till five or six in the morning—sometimes later; and he continued through the night alternately to walk about and lie down, occasionally tranquil, but more often in great agitation.

It now became necessary that somebody should sit up with him, his man-servant being wearied out with the toils of the day. No person seemed to be so proper for this office as his sister, both as having long received a very liberal pension from him, and also as his nearest relative, who would be the best witness to the fact that her illustrious brother had wanted no comforts or attention in his last hours which his situation admitted of. Accordingly, she was applied to, and undertook to watch him alternately with his footman—a separate table being kept for her, and a very handsome addition made to her allowance. She turned out to be a quiet, gentle-minded woman, who raised no disturbances amongst the servants, and soon won her brother's regard by the modest and retiring style of her manners; I may add, also, by the truly sisterly affection which she displayed towards him to the last.

The 8th of October had grievously affected Kant's faculties, but had not wholly destroyed them. For short intervals the clouds seemed to roll away that had settled upon his majestic intellect, and it shone forth as heretofore. During these

moments of brief self-possession, his wonted benignity returned to him; and he expressed his gratitude for the exertions of those about him, and his sense of the trouble they underwent, in a very affecting way. With regard to his man-servant, in particular, he was very anxious that he should be rewarded by liberal presents; and he pressed me earnestly on no account to be parsimonious. Indeed, Kant was nothing less than princely in his use of money; and there was no occasion on which he was known to express the passion of scorn very powerfully but when he was commenting on mean and penurious acts or habits. Those who knew him only in the streets fancied that he was not liberal; for he steadily refused, upon principle, to relieve all common beggars. But, on the other hand, he was most liberal to the public charitable institutions; secretly also he assisted his own poor relations in a much ampler way than could reasonably have been expected of him; and it now appeared that he had many other deserving pensioners upon his bounty; a fact that was utterly unknown to any of us, until his increasing blindness and other infirmities devolved the duty of paying these pensions upon myself. It must be recollected, also, that Kant's whole fortune (which, exclusively of his official appointments, did not amount to more than 20,000 dollars) was the product of his own honourable toils for nearly threescore years; and that he had himself suffered all the hardships of poverty in his youth, though he never once ran into any man's debt; circumstances in his history which, as they express how fully he must have been acquainted with the value of money, greatly enhance the merit of his munificence.

In December 1803 he became incapable of signing his name. His sight, indeed, had for some time failed him so much that at dinner he could not find his spoon without assistance; and, when I happened to dine with him, I first cut in pieces whatever was on his plate, next put it into a dessert-spoon, and then guided his hand to find the spoon. But his inability to sign his name did not arise merely from blindness: the fact was that, from irretention of memory, he could not recollect the letters which composed his name; and, when they were repeated to him, he could not represent

the figure of the letters in his imagination. At the latter end of November I had remarked that these incapacities were rapidly growing upon him, and in consequence I prevailed on him to sign beforehand all the receipts, &c., which would be wanted at the end of the year; and afterwards, on my representation, to prevent all disputes, he gave me a regular legal power to sign on his behalf.

Much as Kant was now reduced, yet he had occasionally moods of social hilarity. His birth-day was always an agreeable subject to him: some weeks before his death, I was calculating the time which it still wanted of that anniversary, and cheering him with the prospect of the rejoicings which would then take place. "All your old friends," said I, "will meet together, and drink a glass of champagne to your health."—"That," said he, "must be done upon the spot"; and he was not satisfied till the party was actually assembled. He drank a glass of wine with them, and, with great elevation of spirits, celebrated by anticipation this birth-day which he was destined never to see.

In the latter weeks of his life, however, a great change took place in the tone of his spirits. At his dinner-table, where heretofore such a cloudless spirit of joviality had reigned, there was now a melancholy silence. It disturbed him to see his two dinner companions conversing privately together, whilst he himself sat like a mute on the stage with no part to perform. Yet to have engaged him in the conversation would have been still more distressing, for his hearing was now very imperfect; the effort to hear was itself painful to him; and his expressions, even when his thoughts were accurate enough, became nearly unintelligible. It is remarkable, however, that at the very lowest point of his depression, when he became perfectly incapable of conversing with any rational meaning on the ordinary affairs of life, he was still able to answer correctly and distinctly, in a degree that was perfectly astonishing, upon any question of philosophy or of science, especially of physical geography, chemistry, or natural history. He talked satisfactorily, in his very worst state, of the gases, and stated very accurately different propositions of Kepler's, especially the law of the planetary motions. And I remember, in particular, that

upon the very last Monday of his life, when the extremity of his weakness moved a circle of his friends to tears, and he sat amongst us insensible to all we could say to him, cowering down, or rather, I might say, collapsing into a shapeless heap upon his chair, deaf, blind, torpid, motionless—even then I whispered to the others, that I would engage that Kant should take his part in conversation with propriety and animation. This they found it difficult to believe. Upon which I drew close to his ear, and put a question to him about the Moors of Barbary. To the surprise of everybody but myself, he immediately gave us a summary account of their habits and customs, and told us, by the way, that in the word *Algiers* the *g* ought to be pronounced hard (as in the English word *gear*).

During the last fortnight of Kant's life, he busied himself unceasingly in a way that seemed not merely purposeless, but self-contradictory. Twenty times in a minute he would unloose and tie his neck-handkerchief; so also with a sort of belt which he wore about his dressing-gown; the moment it was clasped, he unclasped it with impatience, and was then equally impatient to have it clasped again. But no description can convey an adequate impression of the weary restlessness with which from morning to night he pursued these labours of Sisyphus—doing and undoing—fretting that he could not do it, fretting that he had done it.

By this time he seldom knew any of us who were about him, but took us all for strangers. This happened first with his sister, then with me, and finally with his servant. Such an alienation from us all distressed me more than any other instance of his decay: though I knew that he had not really withdrawn his affection from me, yet his air and mode of addressing me gave me constantly that feeling. So much the more affecting was it, when the sanity of his perceptions and his remembrances returned, but at intervals of slower and slower recurrence. In this condition, silent or babbling childishly, self-involved and torpidly abstracted, or else busy with self-created phantoms and delusions, waking up for a moment to trifles, sinking back for hours to what might perhaps be disjointed fragments of grand perishing reveries, what a contrast did he offer to *that* Kant who had once been the

brilliant centre of the most brilliant circles for rank, wit, or knowledge, that Prussia afforded! A distinguished person from Berlin, who had called upon him during the preceding summer, was greatly shocked at his appearance, and said, "This is not Kant that I have seen, but the shell of Kant!" How much more would he have said this, if he had seen him now.

For now came February 1804, which was the last month that Kant was destined to see. It is remarkable that, in the memórandum-book which I have before mentioned, I found a fragment of an old song (inserted by Kant, and dated in the summer about six months before the time of his death), which expressed that February was the month in which people had the least weight to carry, for the obvious reason that it was shorter by two and by three days than the others; and the concluding sentiment was in a tone of fanciful pathos to this effect—"Oh, happy February! in which man has least to bear—least pain, least sorrow, least self-reproach!" Even of this short month, however, Kant had not twelve entire days to bear, for it was on the twelfth that he died; and, in fact, he may be said to have been dying from the first. He now barely vegetated; though there were still transitory gleams flashing fitfully from the embers of his ancient magnificent intellect.

On the 3d of February the springs of life seemed to be ceasing from their play; for from this day, strictly speaking, he ate nothing more. His existence henceforward seemed to be the mere prolongation of an impetus derived from an eighty years' life, after the moving power of the mechanism was withdrawn. His physician visited him every day at a particular hour; and it was settled that I should always be there to meet him. Nine days before his death, on paying his usual visit, the following little circumstance occurred, which affected us both, by recalling forcibly to our minds the ineradicable courtesy and goodness of Kant's nature. When the physician was announced, I went up to Kant, and said to him, "Here is Dr. A——." Kant rose from his chair, and, offering his hand to the doctor, murmured something in which the word "posts" was frequently repeated,

but with an air as though he wished to be helped out with the rest of the sentence. Dr. A——r, who thought that, by *posts*, he meant the stations for relays of post-horses, and therefore that his mind was wandering, replied that all the horses were engaged, and begged him to compose himself. But Kant went on, with great effort to himself, and added, "Many posts, heavy posts—then much goodness—then much gratitude." All this he said with apparent incoherence, but with great warmth, and increasing self-possession. I meantime perfectly divined what it was that Kant, under his cloud of imbecility, wished to say, and I interpreted accordingly. "What the professor wishes to say, Dr. A——, is this,—that, considering the many and weighty posts which you fill in the city and in the university, it argues great goodness on your part to give up so much of your time to him" (for Dr. A—— would never take any fees from Kant), "and that he has the deepest sense of this goodness."—"Right," said Kant, earnestly—"right!" But he still continued to stand, and was nearly sinking to the ground. Upon which I remarked to the physician that Kant, as I was well convinced, would not sit down, however much he suffered from standing, until he knew that his visiters were seated. The doctor seemed to doubt this; but Kant, who heard what I said, by a prodigious effort confirmed my construction of his conduct, and spoke distinctly these words—"God forbid I should be sunk so low as to forget the offices of humanity."

When dinner was announced, Dr. A—— took his leave. Another guest had now arrived, and I was in hopes, from the animation which Kant had so recently displayed, that we should to-day have a pleasant party; but my hopes were vain: Kant was more than usually exhausted; and, though he raised a spoon to his mouth, he swallowed nothing. For some time everything had been tasteless to him; and I had endeavoured, but with little success, to stimulate the organs of taste by nutmeg, cinnamon, &c. To-day all failed, and I could not prevail upon him to taste even a biscuit, rusk, or anything of that sort. I had once heard him say that several of his friends, whose complaint was *marasmus*, had closed their illness by four or five days of entire freedom

from pain, but totally without appetite, and then slumbered tranquilly away. Through this state I apprehended that he was himself now passing.

Saturday, the 4th of February, I heard his guests loudly expressing their fears that they should never meet him again; and I could not but share these fears myself. However, on

Sunday, the 5th, I dined at his table in company with his particular friend Mr. R. R. V. Kant was still present, but so weak that his head drooped upon his knees, and he sank down against the right side of the chair. I went and arranged his pillows, so as to raise and support his head: and, having done this, I said, "Now, my dear sir, you are again in right order." Great was our astonishment when he answered clearly and audibly, in the Roman military phrase, "Yes, *testudine et facie*," and immediately after added, "Ready for the enemy, and in battle array." His powers of mind were smouldering away in their ashes; but every now and then some lambent flame, or grand emanation of light, shot forth, to make it evident that the ancient fire still slumbered below.

Monday, the 6th, he was much weaker and more torpid: he spoke not a word, except on the occasion of my question about the Moors, as previously stated, and sat with sightless eyes, lost in himself, and manifesting no sense of our presence, so that we had the feeling of some mighty phantom from some forgotten century being seated amongst us.

About this time Kant had become much more tranquil and composed. In the earlier periods of his illness, when his yet unbroken strength was brought into active conflict with the first attacks of decay, he was apt to be peevish, and sometimes spoke roughly or even harshly to his servants. This, though very opposite to his natural disposition, was altogether excusable under the circumstances. He could not make himself understood: things were therefore brought to him continually which he had not asked for; and what he really wanted oftentimes he could not obtain, because all his efforts to name it were unintelligible. A violent nervous irritation, besides, affected him, from the unsettling of the equilibrium in the different functions of his nature; weakness

in one organ being made more palpable to him by disproportionate strength in another. But at length the strife was finished; the whole system was thoroughly undermined, and now moving forward in rapid and harmonious progress to dissolution. From this time till all was over, no movement of impatience, or expression of fretfulness, ever escaped him.

I now visited him three times a-day; and on

Tuesday, February 7, going about dinner-time, I found the usual party of friends sitting down alone; for Kant was in bed. This was a new scene in *his* house, and increased our fears that his end was close at hand. However, having seen him rally so often, I would not run the risk of leaving him without a dinner-party for the next day; and accordingly, at the customary hour of one, we assembled in his house on

Wednesday, February 8. I paid my respects to him as cheerfully as possible, and ordered dinner to be served. Kant sat at the table with us; and, taking a spoon with a little soup in it, carried it to his lips; but immediately put it down again, and retired to bed; from which he never rose again.

Thursday, the 9th, he had sunk into the weakness of a dying person, and the corpse-like appearance (*the facies Hippocratica*) had already taken possession of him. I visited him frequently through the course of the day; and, going for the last time about ten o'clock at night, I found him in a state of insensibility. I could not draw any sign from him that he knew me, and I left him to the care of his sister and his servant.

Friday, the 10th, I went to see him at six o'clock in the morning. It was very stormy, and a deep snow had fallen in the night-time. And, by the way, I remember that a gang of house-breakers had forced their way through the premises, in order to reach Kant's next neighbour, who was a goldsmith. As I drew near to his bedside, I said, "Good-morning." He returned my salutation by saying, "Good-morning," but in so feeble and faltering a voice that it was hardly articulate. I was rejoiced to find him sensible, and I asked him if he knew me.—"Yes," he replied; and, stretching out his hand, touched me gently upon the cheek.

Through the rest of the day, whenever I visited him, he seemed to have relapsed into a state of insensibility.

Saturday, the 11th, he lay with fixed and rayless eyes; but to all appearance in perfect peace. I asked him again, on this day, if he knew me. He was speechless, but he turned his face towards me, and made signs that I should kiss him.[1] Deep emotion thrilled me as I stooped down to kiss his pallid lips; for I knew that in this solemn act of tenderness he meant to express his thankfulness for our long friendship, and to signify his last farewell. I had never seen him confer this mark of his love upon anybody except once, and that was a few weeks before his death,

[1] "*That I should kiss him*":—The pathos which belongs to such a mode of final valediction is dependent altogether for its effect upon the contrast between itself and the prevailing tone of manners amongst the society where such an incident occurs. In some parts of the Continent there prevailed during the last century a most effeminate practice amongst *men* of exchanging kisses as a regular mode of salutation on meeting after any considerable period of separation. Under such a standard of manners, the farewell kiss of the dying could have no special effect of pathos. But in nations so inexorably manly as the English, any act which for the moment seems to depart from the usual standard of manliness becomes exceedingly impressive when it recalls the spectator's thoughts to the mighty power which has been able to work such a revolution—the power of death in its final agencies. The brave man has ceased to be in any exclusive sense a man: he has become an infant in his weakness: he has become a woman in his craving for tenderness and pity. Forced by agony, he has laid down his sexual character, and retains only his generic character of a human creature. And he that is manliest amongst the bystanders is also the readiest to sympathise with this affecting change. Ludlow, the parliamentary general of horse, a man of iron nerves, and peculiarly hostile to all scenical displays of sentiment, mentions, nevertheless, in his Memoirs, with sympathising tenderness, the case of a cousin that, when lying mortally wounded on the ground, and feeling his life to be rapidly welling away, entreated his relative to dismount "and kiss him." Everybody must remember the immortal scene on board the *Victory*, at four P.M. on October 21, 1805, and the farewell, "*Kiss me, Hardy!*" of the mighty admiral. And here again, in the final valediction of the stoical Kant, we read another indication, speaking oracularly from dying lips of natures the sternest, that the last necessity—that call which survives all others in men of noble and impassioned hearts—is the necessity of love, is the call for some relenting caress, such as may stimulate for a moment some phantom image of female tenderness in an hour when the actual presence of females is impossible.

when he drew his sister to him and kissed her. The kiss which he now gave to me was the last memorial that he knew me.

Whatever fluid was now offered to him passed the œsophagus with a rattling sound, as often happens with dying people; and there were all the signs of death being close at hand.

I wished to stay with him till all was over, and, as I had been amongst the nearest witnesses of his life, to be witness also of his departure; and therefore I never quitted him, except when I was called off for a few minutes to attend some private business. The whole of this night I spent at his bedside. Though he had passed the day in a state of insensibility, yet in the evening he made intelligible signs that he wished to have his bed put in order; he was therefore lifted out in our arms; and, the bedclothes and pillows being hastily arranged, he was carried back again. He did not sleep; and a spoonful of liquid, which was sometimes put to his lips, he usually pushed aside; but about one o'clock in the night he himself made a movement towards the spoon, from which I collected that he was thirsty; and I gave him a small quantity of wine and water sweetened; but the muscles of his mouth had not strength enough to retain it; so that, to prevent its flowing back, he raised his hand to his lips, until with a rattling sound it was swallowed. He seemed to wish for more; and I continued to give him more, until he said, in a way that I was just able to understand, "It is enough."[1] And these were his last words. It is enough! Sufficit! Mighty and symbolic words! At intervals he pushed away the bedclothes, and exposed his person; I constantly restored the clothes to their situation, and on one of these occasions I found that the whole body and extremities were already growing cold, and the pulse intermitting.

At a quarter after three o'clock, on Sunday morning,

[1] "*It is enough*":—The cup of life, the cup of suffering, is drained. For those who watch, as did the Greek and the Roman, the deep meanings that oftentimes hide themselves (without design and without consciousness on the part of the utterer) in trivial phrases, this final utterance would have seemed intensely symbolic

February 12, 1804, Kant stretched himself out as if taking up a position for his final act, and settled into the precise posture which he preserved to the moment of death. The pulse was now no longer perceptible to the touch in his hands, feet, or neck. I tried every part where a pulse beats, and found none but in the left hip, where it continued to beat with violence, but often intermitted.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon he suffered a remarkable change; his eye was rigid, and his face and lips became discoloured by a cadaverous pallor. Still, such was the intensity of his constitutional habits that no trace appeared of the cold sweat which naturally accompanies the last mortal agony.

It was near eleven o'clock when the moment of dissolution approached. His sister was standing at the foot of the bed, his sister's son at the head. I, for the purpose of still observing the fluctuations in the pulse, was kneeling at the bedside; and I called his servant to come and witness the death of his good master. The last agony was now advancing to its close, if *agony* it could be called where there seemed to be no struggle. And precisely at this moment his distinguished friend Mr. R. R. V., whom I had summoned by a messenger, entered the room. First of all, the breath grew feebler; then it missed its regularity of return; then it wholly intermitted, and the upper lip was slightly convulsed; after this there followed one feeble respiration or sigh; and after that no more; but the pulse still beat for a few seconds —slower and fainter, slower and fainter, till it ceased altogether; the mechanism stopped; the last motion was at an end; and exactly at that moment the clock struck eleven.

Soon after his death the head of Kant was shaved; and, under the direction of Professor Knorr, a plaster cast was taken, not a mask merely, but a cast of the whole head, designed (I believe) to enrich the craniological collection of Dr. Gall.

The corpse being laid out and properly attired, immense numbers of people in every rank, from the highest to the lowest, flocked to see it. Everybody was anxious to avail himself of the last opportunity he would have for entitling

himself to say, "I too have seen Kant." This went on for many days, during which, from morning to night, the house was thronged with the public. Great was the astonishment of all people at the meagreness of Kant's appearance; and it was universally agreed that a corpse so wasted and fleshless had never been beheld. His head rested upon the same cushion on which once the gentlemen of the university had presented an address to him; and I thought that I could not apply it to a more honourable purpose than by placing it in the coffin, as the final pillow of that immortal head.

Upon the style and mode of his funeral Kant had expressed his wishes in earlier years by a special memorandum. He there desired that it should take place early in the morning, with as little noise and disturbance as possible, and attended only by a few of his most intimate friends. Happening to meet with this memorandum, whilst I was engaged at his request in arranging his papers, I very frankly gave him my opinion that such an injunction would lay me, as the executor of his will, under great embarrassments; for that circumstances might very probably arise under which it would be next to impossible to carry it into effect. Upon this Kant tore the paper, and left the whole to my own discretion. The fact was, I foresaw that the students of the university would never allow themselves to be robbed of this occasion for expressing their veneration by a public funeral. The event showed that I was right; for a funeral such as Kant's, one so solemn and so magnificent, the city of Konigsberg has never witnessed before or since. The public journals, and separate reports in pamphlets, &c., have given so minute an account of its details that I shall here notice only the heads of the ceremony.

On the 28th of February, at two o'clock in the afternoon, all the dignitaries of church and state, not only those resident in Konigsberg, but from the remotest parts of Prussia, assembled in the church of the castle. Hence they were escorted by the whole body of the university, splendidly dressed for the occasion, and by many military officers of rank, with whom Kant had always been a great favourite, to the house of the deceased professor; from which the corpse was carried by torchlight,—the bells of every church in Königs-

berg tolling,—to the cathedral, which was lit up by innumerable wax-lights. A never-ending train of people followed it on foot. In the cathedral, after the usual burial rites, accompanied with every possible expression of national veneration to the deceased, there was a grand musical service, most admirably performed; at the close of which, Kant's mortal remains were lowered into the academic vault; and there he now rests among the patriarchs of the university. PEACE BE TO HIS DUST; AND TO HIS MEMORY EVERLASTING HONOUR!

HERDER[1]

WAS Herder a great man? I protest, I cannot say. He is called the German Plato. I will not be so satirical as Mr. Coleridge, who, being told by the pastor of Ratzeburg, that Klopstock was the German Milton, said to himself, "Yes,—a very *German* Milton." The truth is, Plato himself is but an idea to most men; nay, even to most scholars; nay, even to most Platonic scholars.[2] Still, for that very reason, the word "Plato" has a grandeur to the mind—which better acquaintance, if it did not impair, would tend at least to humanize and to make less seraphic. As it is, with the advantage, on Plato's side, of this *ideal* existence, and the disadvantage on Herder's of a language so anti-Grecian as the German in everything except its extent, the contest is too unequal. Making allowances for this, however, I still find it difficult to form any judgment of an author so "many-sided" (to borrow a German expression), so polymorphous, as Herder: there is the same sort of difficulty in making an estimate of

[1] This paper first appeared in the *London Magazine* for April 1823 under the title "Death of a German Great Man," with the signature "X. Y. Z.," but described in the title-page of the magazine as "By the Author of the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater." It was reprinted by De Quincey in the thirteenth volume of his collected writings.—M.

[2] As, for example, to our English translators, who make the Attic bee talk like an old drone both as to sense and expression. See, too, for a specimen of what Plato does *not* mean the *Geist der Speculativen Philosophie* by a tedious man—one Tiedemann.

his merits as there would be to a political economist in appraising the strength and weakness of an empire like the Chinese, or like the Roman under Trajan: to be just, it must be a representative estimate—and therefore abstracted from works, not only many, but also various, and far asunder in purpose and tendency. Upon the whole, the best notion I can give of Herder to the English reader is to say that he is the German Coleridge; having the same all-grasping erudition, the same spirit of universal research, the same disfiguring superficiality and inaccuracy, the same indeterminateness of object, the same obscure and fanciful mysticism (*schwärmerey*), the same plethoric fulness of thought, the same fine sense of the beautiful, and (I think) the same incapacity for dealing with simple and austere grandeur. I must add, however, that in fineness and compass of understanding our English philosopher appears to me to have greatly the advantage. In another point they agree,—both are men of infinite title-pages. I have heard Coleridge acknowledge that his title-pages alone (titles, that is, of works meditated but unexecuted) would fill a large volume: and, it is clear that, if Herder's power had been commensurate with his will, all other authors must have been put down: many generations would have been unable to read to the end of his works. The weakest point about Herder that I know of, was his admiration of Ossian; a weakness from which, I should think, Coleridge must have been preserved,[1] if by nothing else, by his much more accurate acquaintance with the face and appearances, fixed and changing, of external nature.

I have been lately much interested by a life of Herder, edited by Professor J. G. Muller, but fortunately written (or chiefly so) by a person far more competent to speak of him with love and knowledge: viz. Maria Caroline, the widow of Herder. Herder had the unspeakable blessing in this world of an angelic wife, whose company was his consolation under

[1] There is, indeed, a metrical version of *Niny*—what? "Ninithoma," or *Niny*-something in Coleridge's earliest volume of Poems: but that was a very juvenile performance. [The poem referred to is one of two Ossianic pieces printed by Coleridge in 1796,—one with the title "Imitated from Ossian," the other with the title "The Complaint of Ninathoma: from the same."—M.]

a good deal of worldly distress from secret malice and open hostility. She was admirably fitted to be the wife of a philosopher; for, whilst her excellent sense and her innocent heart enabled her to sympathize fully with the general spirit of Herder's labours, she never appears for a moment to have forgotten her feminine character, but declines all attempt to judge of abstruse questions in philosophy,—whatever weight of polemic interest may belong to them in a life of Herder. Her work is very unpretending, and, perhaps, may not have been designed for the public: for it was not published until more than ten years after her death. The title of the book is "*Erinnerungen aus dem Leben Joh. Gottfrieds von Herder* (Recollections from the Life of J. G. Herder): 2 vols. Tubingen, 1820."

It appears that Herder rose from the very humblest rank, and, of necessity, therefore, in his youth, but afterwards from inclination, led a life of most exemplary temperance: this is not denied by those who have attacked him. He was never once intoxicated in his whole life: a fact of very equivocal construction! his nerves would not allow him to drink tea; and, of coffee, though very agreeable to him, he allowed himself but little. All this temperance, however, led to nothing: for he died when he was but four months advanced in his sixtieth year.[1] Surely, if he had been a drunkard or an opium-eater, he might have contrived to weather the point of sixty years. In fact, opium would, perhaps, have been of service to him. For all his sufferings were derived from a most exquisite and morbid delicacy of nervous temperament; and of this it was that he died. With more judicious medical advice, he might have been alive at this hour. His nervous system had the sensitive delicacy of Cowper's and of Rousseau's, but with some peculiarities that belong (in my judgment) exclusively to German temperaments. I cannot explain myself fully on this occasion: but, in general, I will say that, from much observation of the German literature, I perceive a voluptuousness—an animal glow—almost a sensuality in the very intellectual sensibilities of the German, such as I find in the people of no other nation. The French, it will be said, are sensual. Yes: sensual enough. But theirs is

[1] He was born in 1744, and died 18th December 1803.—M.

a factitious sensuality: a sensual direction is given to their sensibilities by the tone of a vicious literature, and a tone of public and domestic life certainly not virtuous. The fault however in the French is the want of depth and simplicity in their feelings. But, in Germany, the life and habits of the people are generally innocent and simple. Sensuality is nowhere less tolerated: intellectual pleasures nowhere more valued. Yet, in the most intellectual of their feelings, there is still a taint of luxury and animal fervour. Let me give one illustration:—In the Paradise Lost, *that* man must have an impure mind who finds the least descent into sensuality in any parts which relate to our first parents in Eden: in no part of his divine works does the purity of Milton's mind shine forth more bright and unsullied: but there is one infirm passage; viz. where Raphael is made to blush on Adam's questioning him about the loves of the heavenly host. The question, in fact, was highly improper, as implying an irregular and unhallowed curiosity not incident to a paradisiacal state. But to make the archangel blush is to load him with a sin-born shame from which even Adam was free. Now, this passage, this single infirm thought of Milton's, is entirely to the taste of Germany; and Klopstock even, who is supposed to support the Hebraic, sublime, and unsensualizing nature against the more Grecian, voluptuous, and beautiful nature of Wieland, &c., yet indulges in this sensualism to excess.

But to return to Herder:—His letters to his wife and children (of which many are given in this work) are delightful; especially those to the former, as they show the infinite, the immeasurable depth of affection which united them. Seldom, indeed, on this earth can there have been a fireside more hallowed by love and pure domestic affections than that of Herder. He wanted only freedom from the cares which oppressed him, and perhaps a little well-boiled opium, combined with a good deal of lemonade or orangeade (of which, as of all fruits, Herder's elegance of taste made him exceedingly fond), to have been the happiest man in Germany. With an angel of a wife, with the love and sympathy of all Germany, and with a medicine for his nerves, what more could the heart of man desire? Yet, not having the

last, the others were flung away upon him; and, in his latter years, he panted after the invisible world, merely because the visible (as he often declared) ceased to stimulate him. That worst and most widely-spread of all diseases, weariness of daily life, inirritability of the nerves to the common stimulants which life supplies, seized upon him to his very heart's core: he was sick of the endless revolution upon his eyes of the same dull unimpassioned spectacle: *tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum* was the spirit of his ceaseless outcry. He fought with this soul-consuming evil; he wrestled with it as a maniac. Change of scene was suggested,—undoubtedly one of the best nervous medicines. Change of scene he tried: he left his home at Weimar, and went to Dresden. There one would think the magnificent library was alone sufficient to stir the nerves even of a paralytic. And so it proved. Herder grew much better: the library, the picture-gallery, the cathedral service, all tended to regenerate him: he received the most flattering attentions: the Elector of that day (1803) expressed a wish to see him. Herder went, and was honoured with a private interview; in the course of which the Elector, who was a prince of great talents and information, paid him a very high and just compliment. "The impression which the noble-minded prince made upon Herder," says Mrs. Herder, "was deep and memorable. On *his* part, the Elector was highly pleased with Herder, as we have learned from the best authority, and is represented as having afterwards consulted a minister on the possibility of drawing him into his service." From Dresden Herder returned home in high spirits, but soon began to droop again. His last illness and death soon followed. These I shall report from the authentic narrative of Mrs. Herder:—

"Full of gratitude, and with many delightful remem-
" brances, did Herder leave Dresden. The three last weeks
" of his residence in that city were the last sun-gleam that
" illumined his life. He purposed for the future to spend
" a few weeks there every now and then, in order to make
" use of the superb library. On the 18th of September he
" arrived at home happy and in high spirits. He found our
" William with us, and gave him such consolation as he

" could upon the loss of his Amelia. William had come, as
" if sent from heaven, to support us all in the months of
" affliction which succeeded, and to tend the sick-bed of his
" father with Godfrey, Emilius, and Louisa. Herder was full
" of plans the most elaborate for the approaching winter:
" such as the consolidation of the secondary schools; the
" third part of the spirit of the Hebrew poetry; and the
" letters from Persepolis: of all which, however, it was the
" will of God that nothing should ever be accomplished. Some-
" times, even up to the last weeks of his life, he confessed
" to me a strange misgiving, seated in the very depths of his
" heart, that he should soon be summoned away from
" Weimar. On the last day of September he held an ex-
" amination for orders, and in a tone of extraordinary eleva-
" tion of mind, as all who were present afterwards declared.
" The subject was—*Upon the Heavenly Hierarchies.* The tenth
" number of the Adrastea (a periodical work conducted by
" Herder) was almost arranged and written in the former
" half, when the first attack of indisposition seized him
" (on the 17th or 18th of October).[1] He soon recovered,
" and did not keep his bed. At favourable opportunities he
" continued to labour upon the Adrastea up to that impressive
" passage with which that number concludes."—[This passage
speaks of the northern mythology as given in the Edda, and
closes with a few verses describing the awe-stricken state of
a human spirit on its first entrance into the presence of God.
Mrs. Herder, whose tenderness makes her superstitious, sees in
this, as in other incidents of that period, ominous signs of
Herder's approaching death.]—" Something it was his inten-
" tion to have added, and so the sheet lay open on his
" writing-table. Our dear Godfrey saw that prophetic leaf
" daily, which was constantly drawing nearer to its fulfil-

[1] Of October! the indignant reader will exclaim—October in what year? You foolish German editor, that belong to the least accurate and wide-awake of all peoples, is it your creed in Germany that there has been but one October in all chronology? The reader, I am well assured, is irritated up to a white heat by this insolent neglect of chronologic dates even in their rudest shapes: for the wretch does not condescend even to indicate the *century* with which his narrative is concerned. But I, for my part, am embarrassed even more than irritated.

" ment, with an anxious and foreboding heart, as he afterwards
" told me. Two months long did the conflict last between
" his powerful nature and his debilitated and shattered nerves.
" All his old complaints were re-awakened. If the physicians
" prescribed remedies for them, then it irritated his nerves;
" and so *vice versa*. At length a total atony of all the vital
" functions came on, which was susceptible of no relief from
" medicine. And thus he witnessed all his powers sinking,
" in the fulness of his consciousness, in perfect possession of
" his intellectual faculties, and in daily hopes of amendment.
" Except Godfrey (for whose attendance he yearned with
" inexpressible anxiety) and our own family circle, he would
" see nobody—at least not with pleasure. To read, or to
" hear another read, was his dearest consolation. Among
" the books which were at that time read aloud at his re-
" quest, I still remember these which follow:—Ossian,
" Lipsius *De Constantia*, Thorild's *Maximum* (but this was
" soon laid aside, because it affected him too much), G.
" Muller's *Remains*, and *the Bible*, especially *the Prophets*.
" These we exchanged by turns for other works of a more
" amusing class that would less affect his head; but we
" never advanced far in any, being soon obliged to lay them
" by: reading, we found, must not be persevered in for any
" length of time; so we varied it with talking and with
" silence. Even the harpsichord, for which he longed so
" often, affected him too powerfully; and we were soon
" obliged to interrupt the performance. Often, in the first
" weeks of his illness, often did he say,—'Oh! if some
" original, some grand, some spiritual idea would but come
" to me from whatsoever quarter, would but possess and
" penetrate my soul, I should be well in a moment.' Yet
" this feeling was unsteady and often fluctuated. When his
" sleepless and agitated nights continued, he said, 'My
" 'complaint is quite incomprehensible to me; my mind is
" 'well, and nothing but my body sick: could I but
" 'quit my bed, oh, what labours I would go through!'
" Certainly he would most gladly have lived, if but for a
" short time longer, for the sake of executing many
" designs; at any rate, to give utterance once again, fully
" and finally, to the thoughts which lay nearest to his

" heart.[1] This feeling he confessed to the physician, Dr. Stark,
" and to Godfrey. Often did he fling his arms about dear
" Godfrey's neck, and said, 'Oh, friend! oh, most beloved
" friend! deliver me; even yet save me, if it be possible.'
" Ah, heavens! what a spectacle of anguish for us all! Our
" hopes, though continually weaker, did not wholly decline,
" up to the last day: not until, after a mighty struggle of
" pain in his breast, did he fall into his final slumber on
" Sunday morning, December 18th. The whole day through
" he slept in profound tranquillity; nor in this world ever
" woke again; but at half-past eleven at night, gently and

[1] This is more fully expressed by Mrs. Herder upon another occasion in the course of the interesting account she gives of Herder's gigantic plans and sketches:—"A few only of his later works were " written, not altogether from any strong impulse of his own nature, " but chiefly with a view to the benefit of others. Hence, alas! more " important labours went unfinished — labours that lay near to " his inmost heart. In the last day of his life he said to our Godfrey, " 'He wished he might be permitted to write but two numbers more " 'of the Adrastea: those two should be his last and consummate " 'labour; in them he would deliver his entire Confession of Faith, " 'seeing that many subjects now appeared to him in a far different " 'light.' He complained that 'he had accomplished so little in his " 'life'; said 'that men pitched the tone of their investigations too " 'high and too artificial, when yet human nature lay broad and open " 'before our eyes—like an unrolled manuscript: nothing was required " 'of us but that we should read; instead of which we fancy and devise " 'all sorts of difficulties.'" It may be judged, from all this, how straitened in point of time Herder must have found himself: so delusive is the impression, which Mr. Coleridge has sought to convey in his *Biographia Literaria*, that Herder had found his various duties as a man of business reconcilable with his higher duties as an intellectual being working for his own age and posterity! Indeed, of no man who ever lived is this more emphatically untrue: but of a hundred similar complaints, in the same passionate style, I select two, by way of correcting the misrepresentation of Mr. Coleridge. 1. At p. 214, Mrs. Herder says, "How often would he ejaculate—'Ah, that I had but time—time—time!' His heart was ready to break at the thought of how much that he wished to communicate must be sealed up with himself in the grave." 2. (P. 224) "Many a time in company, when the conversation happened to turn upon confinement in a fortress, he would say pleasantly, but at the same time earnestly—'For my part, I envy the man who is thrown into a dungeon, provided he has a good conscience, and knows how to employ his time. To me no greater service could be rendered than exactly to shut me up for some years in prison, with permission to pursue my labours, and to procure the

" without a groan, slumbered away into the arms of God.
" Oh ! tears and anguish that could never waken him again !
" him that was the only one for whom we lived—our guardian-
" angel that lived for us. Oh ! counsels of the unfathomable
" God ! But thou, heavenly Father, wilt take away the veil
" from my eyes : all will be revealed ; and, perhaps, in no
" long[1] period of time !"

Having expressed my inability to adjust the balance of Herder's claims, even to my own satisfaction, it will gratify the reader to see this deficiency supplied by one of the most

books I might want. Oh ! never was poor soul more wearied out than I am with this hurry of business amongst crowds.'" If, therefore, Herder contrived to do a great deal of business, in the common sense of the word, combined with a great deal of intellectual work, he did it only by sacrificing an answerable proportion of the latter : to do that which any stout man might have been hired to do far better for a guinea a day, he left undone that which only intellectual men, sometimes only himself, could have done. Mr. Coleridge's object could not have been to show us that by a sacrifice to that extent a man might gain time for ordinary business : *that* had never been doubted. His thesis was that the performance of this ordinary business might be so managed as not only to subtract nothing from the higher employments, but even greatly to assist them : and Herder's case was alleged as a proof and an illustration ; with what countenance from Herder himself we here see.—How immense were Herder's plans may be judged by the reader when he is informed that the following are but a slight fraction of his entire scheme of outlines :—

1. Spanish Literature, ...
2. Hebrew ; the elder and the latter Jewish Literature,.. .. . .
3. Icelandic, ...

} to be exhibited on a great scale.

4. Grecian Mythology, to be delivered and interpreted.
5. Natural Philosophy to be studied for some years : this plan was much ripened and extended on occasion of the discovery of galvanism —of his personal acquaintance with Werner, who explained to him in conversation his system of geology—and on occasion of Dr. Gall's Craniological Lectures.

6. Select Tragedies from Shakspere and from the Greek,....... .. ..
7. Horace, ...
8. Pindar,. ... .
9. The Bible,....... .. . .
10. Ossian, ...

} to be translated.

11. A History of Poetry,
12. A Life of Luther,....

} to be composed : in 4to, of course.

[1] She died about two years after writing this passage.

original men of any age—John Paul Richter, the Rousseau and the Sterne of Germany; whose opportunities for judging of Herder were great beyond those of any other contemporary with talents equal to the task. Herder was in the habit of holding weekly *conversaziones* to save his own time from unprofitable interruptions: but John Paul was so select a favourite that, on his visits to Weimar, he seldom attended the public nights, being a privileged guest in the family circle at all times, and when others were excluded. "Of this dear "friend," says Mrs. Herder, "I must make a separate mention. "He first came to Weimar in the latter half of the year 1790, "as if sent by Providence for the especial consolation of "Herder, at a time when he was universally misrepresented, "and by some people actually shunned, on account of the "political and philosophic principles ascribed to him. Dif"ferent as were their views in regard to many subjects, yet "in principle and in feeling they were thoroughly united. "The high moral tone of both writers, and their rank as "great intellectual physicians for their own age, furnished a "natural ground of sympathy with each other that led to the "closest friendship. Herder soon loved his young friend; "and his reverence for the great endowments of his mind "increased daily. The happy evenings which Richter spent "with us, the serenity and youthful freshness of his mind, "his burning eloquence, and the inexhaustible life, humour, "and originality of his conversation upon everything that "came before him, re-animated Herder's existence. Oh! "how often has the genial humour of this great favourite of "Germany, in the course of an evening's walk or ride to "Ettersburg, beguiled Herder of a world of sad thoughts, "and cheated him into smiles and cheerfulness! In many "respects it is true that Herder did not approve of John "Paul's style and manner: and their amicable differences on "this point often led to very instructive conversations. But, "for all that, Herder esteemed his native genius, and the "teeming creativeness of his poetic spirit, far above the un"feeling and purely *statuesque* poetry of the day, in which "everything was sacrificed to mere beauty of *form;* and, in "reference to certain poets of the age [no doubt Mrs. Herder "alludes chiefly to Wieland] who applied the greatest gift of

" God to the injury of religion and good morals, thus abusing
" the divinity of their art to the abasement and brutalizing
" of man's nature, Herder would often say with a noble
" scorn : 'Above all such poets our dear friend John Paul
" 'stands at an immeasurable elevation : I willingly pardon
" 'him his want of ordonnance and of metre, in consideration
" 'of his high-toned virtue, his living world, his profound
" 'heart, his creative and plastic intellect. He is a true poet,
" 'fresh from the hands of God, and brings new life, truth,
" 'virtue, and reality, into our vitiated and emasculated
" 'poetry.' "

The passages in which John Paul[1] speaks of Herder are many : two in particular I remember of great beauty ; one in the *Flegel-jahre*, the other in his last work, *Der Comet* (1821) ; but, not having those works at hand, I will adopt that which is cited by the editor of Mrs. Herder's Memoirs, omitting only such parts as would be unintelligible without explanations of disproportionate length :—

" Alike in all the changing periods of his own life, and
" by the most hostile parties, it was the fate of this great
" spirit to be misunderstood ; and (to speak candidly) not
" altogether without his own fault. For he had this defect,
" that he was no star, whether of the first, second, or any
" other magnitude, but a whole cluster and fasciculus of stars,
" out of which it is for every one to compose at pleasure a
" constellation shaped after his own preconception. Mono-
" dynamic men, men of a single talent, are rarely misappre-
" hended ; men of multitudinous powers, *myriad-minded*
" men, to use Coleridge's phrase, almost always. . . . If he
" was no poet, as he would himself often protest, measur-
" ing his own pretensions by the Homeric and Shaksperian[2]
" standard, he was, however, something still better, namely,

[1] I call him *John Paul*, because he is universally known by that familiar appellation throughout Germany ; just as Rousseau is called *Jean Jaques*.

[2] For the sake of English readers I must mention (to those who know anything of the German literature it is superfluous to mention) that Herder, in common with every man of eminence in modern Germany, paid almost divine honours to Shakspere : his wife tells us, in her interesting memoirs of him, that he could repeat *Hamlet* by heart.

"a *Poem*, an Indico-Grecian Epopee, fashioned by some
"divinest and purest architect: how else, or by what analytic
"skill, should I express the nature of this harmonious soul,
"in which, as in a poem, all was reconciled and fused; in
"which the good, the beautiful, and the true, were blended
"and indivisible? Greece was to him the supreme object of
"devotion, the pole to which his final aspirations pointed;
"and, universally as he was disposed by his cosmopolitan
"taste to find and to honour merit, yet did he from his
"inmost soul yearn, in the very midst of the blooming lands
"through which he strayed, like any far-travelled Ulysses,
"for his restoration to a Grecian home; more especially in
"his latter years. Herder was designed as it were from
"some breathing Grecian model. Thence came his Grecian
"reverence for life in all its gradations: like a Brahmin,
"with a divine Spinozism of the heart, he loved the humblest
"reptile, the meanest insect, and every blossom of the woods.
"Thence came the epic style of all his works, which, like a
"philosophic epos, with the mighty hand and with the im-
"partiality of a God, brought up before the eye [1] of centuries,
"and upon a stage of boundless proportions, all times, forms,
"nations, spirits. Thence also came his Grecian disgust
"towards all excess, disproportion, or disturbance of equili-
"brium this way or that. Thence was it that, like a Grecian
"poem, he drew by anticipation round about every feeling and
"emotion a severe line of beauty, which not even the most
"impassioned was allowed to overstep. Few minds have
"been learned upon the same grand scale as Herder. The
"major part pursue only what is most rare and least familiar
"in science: he, on the contrary, could receive only the
"great and catholic streams of every science into the mighty
"depths of his own heaven-reflecting ocean, that impressed
"upon them all its own motion and fluctuation. Others are
"fastened upon by their own learning as by a withering

[1] In the original "vor das Sakularische auge"; and, in the true meaning of the word "secular," as it is exhibited by Milton in the fine expression "A *secular* bird," meaning the phœnix, I might have translated it, "before the secular eye": but the vulgar theologic sense of the word in English would have led to a misinterpretation of the meaning. No other equivalent term occurs to me except *Aeonian:* and *that* is too uncommon to be generally intelligible.

"and strangling ivy; but *his* hung about him as gracefully
"as the tendrils of a vine, and adorned him with fruit as
"with clusters of grapes. . . . How magnificently, how irre-
"concilably, did he blaze into indignation against the creep-
"ing and crawling vermin of the times: against German
"coarseness of taste, against all sceptres in brutal paws,
"and against the snakes of the age! But, would you hear
"the sweetest of voices, it was *his* voice in the utterance of
"love, whether for a little child, or for poetry, or for music,
"or in the tones of mercy and forbearance towards the weak.
"In general he has been little weighed or appraised, and in
"parts only; never as a whole. His due valuation he will
"first find in the diamond scales of posterity; into which
"scales will assuredly not be admitted the pebbles with
"which he was pelted by the coarse critics of his days, and
"the still coarser disciples of Kant. . . . Two sayings of his
"survive, which may seem trifling to others; me they never
"fail to impress profoundly. One was that on some occasion,
"whilst listening to choral music that streamed from a
"neighbouring church as from the bosom of some distant
"century, he wished, with a sorrowful allusion to the cold
"frosty spirit of these times, that he had been born in the
"middle ages. The other, and a far different sentiment,
"was that he would gladly communicate with an apparition
"from the spiritual world, and that he neither felt nor fore-
"boded anything of the usual awe connected with such a
"communication. Oh, the pure soul that already held com-
"merce with spirits! To such a soul this was possible,
"poetical as *that* soul was; and, though it be true that just
"such souls it is that shudder with the deepest awe before
"the noiseless and inaudible mysteries that dwell and walk
"on the other side of death, to his soul it was possible; for
"the spirit of Herder was itself an apparition upon this
"earth, and never forgot its native world. At this moment
"I think I see him; and, potent as death is otherwise to
"glorify the images of men with saintly transfiguration, yet
"methinks that from the abyss of distance and of sumless
"elevation he appears not more radiant or divine than he
"did here below; and I think of him, far aloft in the
"heavens and behind the stars, as in his *natural* place, and

" as of one but little altered from what he was, except by the
" blotting out of his earthly sorrows."

What is said of the disciples of Kant in the above extract is to be explained thus:—Herder when a young man had studied at Königsberg; and, in consideration of his poverty, Kant had allowed him to attend his lectures gratis. Herder was sensible (though from the style of his own mind insufficiently sensible) of Kant's greatness, and in after life often spoke publicly of Kant with great reverence. Kant, on the other hand, admired his pupil, and augured well of his future success, but never dissembled his disapprobation of what he considered crazy and visionary enthusiasm (*Schwärmerey*). This feeling, openly and frankly expressed, seems in youth to have given Herder little offence: but in after life, being repeated to him, perhaps with some ill-natured aggravations, so wounded his own self-esteem that he attempted to avenge himself by an attack upon Kant's great work, the *Kritik der R. Vernunft*, in a Metakritik. Of this attack, which was in truth perfectly feeble, Kant took no sort of notice: and it fell into immediate contempt. But the followers of Kant throughout Germany could not forgive the insult offered to their master, and too often allowed themselves, in their indignation at this instance of infirmity in Herder, to forget his real services to literature and philosophy.

NOTE in 1859.—Many readers will have read in the public journals of Europe that one eminent *littérateur* of Germany within the last half century had died in the act of shouting out clamorously—"*Light, I say!—more light!*" But, on reading the life of another not less celebrated, we find that he died in effect shouting with agonizing emphasis—"*Time, I say!—more time!*" And who was this frantic patient that signalized his farewell intercourse with the world by maniacal shrieks for time? It was Herder, the very man (or leader of the men) whom Coleridge alleged in proof of his position that intellectual labours need not *so* to press upon any man's nervous system but that he might still find ample openings for every sort of worldly business. This doctrine I subsequently disputed; and out of my paper arose, some years later, a very beautiful vindication of her father's views from the pen of his most accomplished daughter (the widow of her cousin). Entertaining myself the very highest respect for the great natural endowments and really astonishing attainments of this interesting lady, I had fancied that the best way to show this respect was by a grave examination of her arguments and her ex-

emplifications. But, before I could accomplish this task satisfactorily, to my own profound sorrow Mrs. Coleridge was carried off by an organic malady for which medicine has no relief. I am suddenly reminded of it, however, and in an impressive way, by the statements of Mrs. Herder, especially at pp. 386-388. These revelations fall with crushing effect—not upon anything separately belonging to Mrs. Coleridge, but upon the whole conduct of the argument (as it stands in his *Biographia Literaria*) by her father. Mrs. Coleridge's own beautiful papers will be found towards the end of some volume in the series of her father's select works as republished by herself.

GOETHE[1]

John Wolfgang von Goethe was a man of commanding influence in the literature of modern Germany throughout the latter half of his long life, and possessing two separate claims upon our notice: one in right of his own unquestionable talents; and another much stronger, though less direct, arising out of his position, and the extravagant partisanship put forward on his behalf for the last forty years. The literary body in all countries, and for reasons which rest upon a sounder basis than that of private jealousies, have always been disposed to a republican simplicity in all that regards the assumption of rank and personal pretensions. *Valeat quantum valere potest* is the form of licence to every man's ambition, coupled with its caution. Let his influence and authority be commensurate with his attested value; and, because no man in the present infirmity of human speculation, and the present multiformity of human power, can hope for more than a very limited superiority, there is an end at once to all *absolute* dictatorship. The dictatorship in any case could be only *relative*, and in relation to a single department of art or knowledge; and this for a reason stronger even than that already noticed, viz. the vast extent of the field on which the intellect is now summoned to employ itself. That objection, as it applies only to the *degree* of the difficulty, might be met by a corresponding degree of mental energy; such a

[1] Contributed by De Quincey to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*—M.

thing may be supposed, at least. But another difficulty there is, of a profounder character, which cannot be so easily parried: those who have reflected at all upon the fine arts know that power of one kind is often inconsistent, positively incompatible, with power of another kind. For example, the *dramatic* mind is incompatible with the *epic*. And, though we should consent to suppose that some intellect might arise endowed upon a scale of such angelic comprehensiveness as to vibrate equally and indifferently towards either pole, still it is next to impossible, in the exercise and culture of the two powers, but some bias must arise which would give that advantage to the one over the other which the right arm has over the left. But the supposition, the very case put, is baseless, and countenanced by no precedent. Yet, under this previous difficulty, and with regard to a literature convulsed, if any ever was, by an almost total anarchy, it is a fact notorious to all who take an interest in Germany and its concerns, that Goethe did, in one way or other, through the length and breadth of that vast country, establish a supremacy of influence wholly unexampled,—a supremacy indeed perilous in a less honourable man to those whom he might chance to hate, and with regard to himself thus far unfortunate, that it conferred upon every work proceeding from his pen a sort of papal indulgence, an immunity from criticism, or even from the appeals of good sense, such as it is not wholesome that any man should enjoy. Yet we repeat that German literature was and is in a condition of total anarchy: with this solitary exception, no name, even in the most narrow section of knowledge or of power, has ever been able in that country to challenge unconditional reverence; whereas, with us and in France, name the science, name the art, and we will name the dominant professor; a difference which partly arises out of the fact that England and France are governed in their opinions by two or three capital cities, whilst Germany looks for its leadership to as many cities as there are *residenzen* and universities: for instance, the little territory with which Goethe was connected presented no less than two such public lights,—Weimar, the *residenz* or privi leged abode of the Grand Duke, and Jena, the university founded by that house. Partly, however, this difference may

be due to the greater restlessness, and to the greater energy as respects mere speculation, of the German mind. But, no matter whence arising, or how interpreted, the fact is what we have described: absolute confusion, the "anarch old" of Milton, is the one deity whose sceptre is there paramount; and yet *there* it was, in that very realm of chaos, that Goethe built his throne. That he must have looked with trepidation and perplexity upon his wild empire and its "dark foundations" may be supposed. The tenure was uncertain to *him* as regarded its duration; to us it is equally uncertain, and in fact mysterious, as regards its origin. Meantime the mere fact, contrasted with the general tendencies of the German literary world, is sufficient to justify a notice, somewhat circumstantial, of the man in whose favour, whether naturally by force of genius, or by accident concurring with intrigue, so unexampled a result was effected.

Goethe was born at noonday on the 28th of August 1749, in his father's house at Frankfort on the Maine. The circumstances of his birth were thus far remarkable, that, unless Goethe's vanity deceived him, they led to a happy revolution hitherto retarded by female delicacy falsely directed. From some error of the midwife who attended his mother, the infant Goethe appeared to be still-born. Sons there were as yet none from this marriage; everybody was therefore interested in the child's life; and the panic which arose in consequence, having survived its immediate occasion, was improved into a public resolution (for which no doubt society stood ready at that moment) to found some course of public instruction from this time forward for those who undertook professionally the critical duties of accoucheur.

We have noticed the house in which Goethe was born, as well as the city. Both were remarkable, and fitted to leave lasting impressions upon a young person of sensibility. As to the city, its antiquity is not merely venerable, but almost mysterious: towers were at that time to be found in the mouldering lines of its earliest defences which belonged to the age of Charlemagne, or one still earlier; battlements adapted to a mode of warfare anterior even to that of feudalism or romance. The customs, usages, and local privileges of Frankfort, and the rural districts adjacent, were of a corre-

sponding character. Festivals were annually celebrated at a short distance from the walls, which had descended from a dateless antiquity. Everything which met the eye spoke the language of elder ages; whilst the river on which the place was seated, its great fair, which still held the rank of the greatest in Christendom, and its connexion with the throne of Cæsar and his inauguration, by giving to Frankfort an interest and a public character in the eyes of all Germany, had the effect of countersigning, as it were by state authority, the importance which she otherwise challenged to her ancestral distinctions. Fit house for such a city, and in due keeping with the general scenery, was that of Goethe's father. It had in fact been composed out of two contiguous houses; that accident had made it spacious and rambling in its plan; whilst a further irregularity had grown out of the original difference in point of level between the corresponding storeys of the two houses, making it necessary to connect the rooms of the same *suite* by short flights of steps. Some of these features were no doubt removed by the recast of the house under the name of "repairs" (to evade a city by-law) afterwards executed by his father; but such was the house of Goethe's infancy, and in all other circumstances of style and furnishing equally antique.

The spirit of society in Frankfort, without a court, a university, or a learned body of any extent, or a resident nobility in its neighbourhood, could not be expected to display any very high standard of polish. Yet, on the other hand, as an independent city, governed by its own separate laws and tribunals (that privilege of *autonomy* so dearly valued by ancient Greece), and possessing besides a resident corps of jurisprudents and of agents in various ranks for managing the interests of the German Emperor and other princes, Frankfort had the means within herself of giving a liberal tone to the pursuits of her superior citizens, and of co-operating in no inconsiderable degree with the general movement of the times, political or intellectual. The Memoirs of Goethe himself, and in particular the picture there given of his own family, as well as other contemporary glimpses of German domestic society in those days, are sufficient to show that much knowledge, much true cultivation of mind, much

sound refinement of taste, were then distributed through the middle classes of German society; meaning by that very indeterminate expression those classes which for Frankfort composed the aristocracy, viz. all who had daily leisure and regular funds for employing it to advantage. It is not necessary to add, because that is a fact applicable to all stages of society, that Frankfort presented many and various specimens of original talent, moving upon all directions of human speculation.

Yet, with this general allowance made for the capacities of the place, it is too evident that, for the most part, they lay inert and undeveloped. In many respects Frankfort resembled an English cathedral city, according to the standard of such places seventy years ago,—not, that is to say, like Carlisle in this day, where a considerable manufacture exists, but like Chester as it is yet. The chapter of a cathedral, the resident ecclesiastics attached to the duties of so large an establishment, men always well educated, and generally having families, compose the original *nucleus*, around which soon gathers all that part of the local gentry who, for any purpose, whether of education for their children, or of social enjoyment for themselves, seek the advantages of a town. Hither resort all the timid old ladies who wish for conversation or other forms of social amusement; hither resort the valetudinarians, male or female, by way of commanding superior medical advice at a cost not absolutely ruinous to themselves; and multitudes besides, with narrow incomes, to whom these quiet retreats are so many cities of refuge.

Such, in one view, they really are; and yet in another they have a vicious constitution. Cathedral cities in England, imperial cities without manufactures in Germany, are all in an improgressive condition. The public employments of every class in such places continue the same from generation to generation. The amount of superior families oscillates rather than changes; that is, it fluctuates within fixed limits; and, for all inferior families, being composed either of shopkeepers or of menial servants, they are determined by the number, or,—which, on a large average, is the same,—by the pecuniary power, of their employers. Hence it arises that room is made for one man, in whatever line of dependence,

only by the death of another; and the constant increments of the population are carried off into other cities. Not less is the difference of such cities as regards the standard of manners. How striking is the soft and urbane tone of the lower orders in a cathedral city, or in a watering-place dependent upon ladies, contrasted with the bold, often insolent, demeanour of a self-dependent artizan or mutinous mechanic of Manchester and Glasgow!

Children, however, are interested in the state of society around them chiefly as it affects their parents. Those of Goethe were respectable, and perhaps tolerably representative of the general condition in their own rank. An English authoress of great talent, in her "Characteristics of Goethe,"[1] has too much countenanced the notion that he owed his intellectual advantages exclusively to his mother. Of this there is no proof. His mother wins more esteem from the reader of this day, because she was a cheerful woman, of serene temper, brought into advantageous comparison with a husband much older than herself, whom circumstances had rendered moody, fitful, sometimes capricious, and confessedly obstinate in that degree which Pope has taught us to think connected with inveterate error.

"Stiff in opinion, always in the wrong,"

unhappily presents an association too often actually occurring in nature to leave much chance for error in presuming either quality from the other. And, in fact, Goethe's father was so uniformly obstinate in pressing his own views upon all who belonged to him, whenever he did come forward in an attitude of activity, that his family had much reason to be thankful for the rarity of such displays. Fortunately for them, his indolence neutralised his obstinacy. And the worst shape in which his troublesome temper showed itself was in what concerned the religious reading of the family. Once begun, the worst book as well as the best, the longest no less than the shortest, was to be steadfastly read through to the last word of the last volume; no excess of yawning availed to obtain a reprieve,—not, adds his son, though he

[1] *Characteristics of Goethe*, &c., by Sarah Austin. London, 1833. Three vols.—M.

were himself the leader of the yawners. As an illustration, he mentions Bowyer's "History of the Popes"; which awful series of records, the catacombs, as it were, in the palace of history, were actually traversed from one end to the other of the endless *suite* by the unfortunate house of Goethe. Allowing, however, for the father's unamiableness in this one point, upon all intellectual ground both parents seem to have met very much upon a level. Two illustrations may suffice, one of which occurred during the infancy of Goethe. The science of education was at that time making its first rude motions towards an ampler development; and, amongst other reforms then floating in the general mind, was one for eradicating the childish fear of ghosts, &c. The young Goethes, as it happened, slept not in separate beds only, but in separate rooms; and not unfrequently the poor children, under the stinging terrors of their lonely situation, stole away from their "forms," to speak in the hunter's phrase, and sought to rejoin each other. But in these attempts they were liable to surprises from the enemy; papa and mamma were both on the alert, and often intercepted the young deserter by a cross march or an ambuscade; in which cases each had a separate policy for enforcing obedience. The father, upon his general system of "perseverance," compelled the fugitive back to his quarters, and, in effect, exhorted him to persist in being frightened out of his wits. To his wife's gentle heart that course appeared cruel, and she reclaimed the delinquent by bribes; the peaches which her garden walls produced being the fund from which she chiefly drew her supplies for this branch of the secret service. What were her winter bribes, when the long nights would seem to lie heaviest on the exchequer, is not said. Speaking seriously, no man of sense can suppose that a course of suffering from terrors the most awful, under whatever influence supported, whether under the naked force of compulsion, or of *that* connected with bribes, could have any final effect in mitigating the passion of awe connected, by our very dreams, with the shadowy and the invisible, or in tranquillizing the infantine imagination.

A second illustration involves a great moral event in the history of Goethe, as it was, in fact, the first occasion of his

receiving impressions at war with his religious creed. Piety is so beautiful an ornament of the youthful mind, doubt or distrust so unnatural a growth from confiding innocence, that an infant freethinker is heard of not so much with disgust as with perplexity. A sense of the ludicrous is apt to intermingle; and we lose our natural horror of the result in wonder at its origin. Yet in this instance there is no room for doubt; the fact and the occasion are both on record; there can be no question about the date; and, finally, the accuser is no other than the accused. Goethe's own pen it is which proclaims, that already in the early part of his seventh year his reliance upon God as a moral governor had suffered a violent shock—was shaken, if not undermined. On the 1st of November 1755 occurred the great earthquake at Lisbon. Upon a double account, this event occupied the thoughts of all Europe for an unusual term of time; both as an expression upon a larger scale than usual of the mysterious physical agency concerned in earthquakes, and also for the awful human tragedy[1] which attended either the earthquake itself or its immediate sequel in the sudden irruption of the Tagus. Sixty thousand persons, victims to the dark power in its first or its second *avatar*, attested the Titanic scale upon which it worked. Here it was that the shallow piety of the Germans found a stumbling-block. Those who have read any circumstantial history of the physical signs which preceded this earthquake are aware that in England and Northern Germany many singular phenomena were observed, more or less manifestly connected with the same dark agency which terminated at Lisbon, and running before this final catastrophe at times so accurately varying with the distances as to furnish something like a scale for measuring the velocity with which it moved. These German phenomena, circulated rapidly over

[1] Of this no picture can ever hope to rival that hasty one sketched in the letter of the chaplain to the Lisbon factory. The plague of Athens as painted by Thucydides or Lucretius, nay even the fabulous plague of London by De Foe, contain no scenes or situations equal in effect to some in this plain historic statement. Nay, it would perhaps be difficult to produce a passage from Ezekiel, from Æschylus, or from Shakspere, which would so profoundly startle the sense of sublimity as one or two of his incidents.

all Germany by the journals of every class, had seemed to give to the Germans a nearer and more domestic interest in the great event than belonged to them merely in their universal character of humanity. It is also well known to observers of national characteristics that amongst the Germans the household charities, the *pieties of the hearth*, as they may be called, exist, if not really in greater strength, yet with much less of the usual balances or restraints. A German father, for example, is like the grandfather of other nations; and thus a piety, which in its own nature scarcely seems liable to excess, takes, in its external aspect, too often an air of effeminate imbecility. These two considerations are necessary to explain the intensity with which this Lisbon tragedy laid hold of the German mind, and chiefly under the one single aspect of its *undistinguishing* fury. Women, children, old men,—these, doubtless, had been largely involved in the perishing sixty thousand; and that reflection, it would seem from Goethe's account, had so far embittered the sympathy of the Germans with their distant Portuguese brethren that, in the Frankfort discussions, sullen murmurs had gradually ripened into bold impeachments of Providence. There can be no gloomier form of infidelity than that which questions the moral attributes of the Great Being in whose hands are the final destinies of us all. Such, however, was the form of Goethe's earliest scepticism, such its origin; caught up from the very echoes which rang through the streets of Frankfort when the subject occupied all men's minds: and such, for anything that appears, continued to be its form thenceforwards to the close of his life, if speculations so crude could be said to have any form at all. Many are the analogies, some close ones, between England and Germany with regard to the circle of changes they have run through, political or social, for a century back. The challenges are frequent to a comparison; and sometimes the result would be to the advantage of Germany, more often to ours. But in religious philosophy, which in reality is the true *popular* philosophy, how vast is the superiority on the side of this country! Not a shopkeeper or mechanic, we may venture to say, but would have felt this obvious truth, that surely the Lisbon earthquake yielded no fresh lesson,

no peculiar moral, beyond what belonged to every man's experience in every age. A passage in the New Testament about the fall of the tower of Siloam, and the just construction of that event, had already anticipated the difficulty, if such it could be thought. Not to mention that calamities upon the same scale in the earliest age of Christianity, the fall of the amphitheatre at Fidenæ, or the destruction of Pompeii, had presented the same problem as the Lisbon earthquake. Nay, it is presented daily in the humblest individual case where wrong is triumphant over right, or innocence confounded with guilt in one common disaster. And that the parents of Goethe should have authorized his error, if only by their silence, argues a degree of ignorance in them which could not have co-existed with much superior knowledge in the public mind.

Goethe, in his Memoirs (book iv), commends his father for the zeal with which he superintended the education of his children. But apparently it was a zeal without knowledge. Many things were taught imperfectly, but all casually, and as chance suggested them. Italian was studied a little, because the elder Goethe had made an Italian tour, and had collected some Italian books, and engravings by Italian masters. Hebrew was studied a little, because Goethe the son had a fancy for it, partly with a view to theology, and partly because there was a Jewish quarter, gloomy and sequestrated, in the city of Frankfort. French offered itself no doubt on many suggestions, but originally on occasion of a French theatre, supported by the staff of the French army when quartered in the same city. Latin was gathered in a random way from a daily sense of its necessity; English upon the temptation of a stranger's advertisement, promising upon moderate terms to teach that language in four weeks,—a proof, by the way, that the system of bold innovations in the art of tuition had already commenced. Riding and fencing were also attempted, under masters apparently not very highly qualified, and in the same desultory style of application. Dancing was taught to his family, strange as it may seem, by Mr. Goethe himself. There is good reason to believe that not one of all these accomplishments was possessed by Goethe, when ready to visit the university, in a

degree which made it practically of any use to him. Drawing and music were pursued confessedly as amusements; and it would be difficult to mention any attainment whatsoever which Goethe had carried to a point of excellence in the years which he spent under his father's care, unless it were his mastery over the common artifices of metre and the common topics of rhetoric, which fitted him for writing what are called occasional poems and *impromptus*. This talent he possessed in a remarkable degree, and at an early age; but he owed its cultivation entirely to himself.

In a city so orderly as Frankfort, and in a station privileged from all the common hardships of poverty, it can hardly be expected that many incidents should arise, of much separate importance in themselves, to break the monotony of life; and the mind of Goethe was not contemplative enough to create a value for common occurrences through any peculiar impressions which he had derived from them. In the years 1763 and 1764, when he must have been from fourteen to fifteen years old, Goethe witnessed the inauguration and coronation of a king of the Romans, a solemn spectacle connected by prescription with the city of Frankfort. He describes it circumstantially, but with very little feeling, in his "Memoirs." Probably the prevailing sentiment, on looking back at least to this transitory splendour of dress, processions, and ceremonial forms, was one of cynical contempt. But this he could not express, as a person closely connected with a German court, without giving much and various offence. It is with some timidity even that he hazards a criticism upon single parts of the costume adopted by some of the actors in that gorgeous scene. White silk stockings, and pumps of the common form, he objects to as out of harmony with the antique and heraldic aspects of the general costume, and ventures to suggest either boots or sandals as an improvement. Had Goethe felt himself at liberty from all restraints of private consideration in composing these "Memoirs," can it be doubted that he would have taken his retrospect of this Frankfort inauguration from a different station,—from the station of that stern revolution which, within his own time, and partly under his own eyes, had shattered the whole imperial system of thrones in whose

equipage this gay pageant made so principal a figure, had humbled Cæsar himself to the dust, and left him an emperor without an empire. We at least, for our parts, could not read without some emotion one little incident of these gorgeous scenes recorded by Goethe,—namely, that, when the emperor, on rejoining his wife for a few moments, held up to her notice his own hands and arms arrayed in the antique habiliments of Charlemagne, Maria Theresa—she whose children were summoned to so sad a share in the coming changes—gave way to sudden bursts of loud laughter, audible to the whole populace below her. That laugh on surveying the departing pomps of Charlemagne must, in any contemplative ear, have rung with a sound of deep significance, and with something of the same effect which belongs to a figure of Death introduced by a painter as mixing in the festal dances of a bridal assembly.

These pageants of 1763-64 occupy a considerable space in Goethe's "Memoirs," and with some *logical* propriety at least, in consideration of their being exclusively attached to Frankfort, and connected by manifold links of person and office with the privileged character of the city. Perhaps he might feel a sort of narrow local patriotism in recalling these scenes to public notice by description, at a time when they had been irretrievably extinguished as realities. But, after making every allowance for their local value to a Frankfort family, and for their memorable splendour, we may venture to suppose that by far the most impressive remembrances which had gathered about the boyhood of Goethe were those which pointed to Frederick of Prussia. This singular man, so imbecile as a pretender to philosophy and new lights, so truly heroic under misfortunes, was the first German who created a German interest, and gave a transient unity to the German name under all its multiplied divisions. Were it only for this conquest of difficulties so peculiar, he would deserve his German designation of Fred. the Unique (*Fritz der einzige*). He had been partially tried and known previously; but it was the Seven Years' War which made him the popular idol. This began in 1756; and to Frankfort, in a very peculiar way, that war brought dissensions and heart-burnings in its train. The imperial connexions of the

city with many public and private interests pledged it to the anti-Prussian cause. It happened also that the truly German character of the reigning imperial family, the domestic habits of the empress and her young daughters, and other circumstances, were of a nature to endear the ties of policy: self-interest and affection pointed in the same direction. And yet were all these considerations allowed to melt away before the brilliant qualities of one man, and the romantic enthusiasm kindled by his victories. Frankfort was divided within herself; the young and the generous were all dedicated to Frederick: a smaller party, more cautious and prudent, were for the imperialists. Families were divided upon this question against families, and often against themselves; feuds, begun in private, issued often into public violence; and, according to Goethe's own illustration, the streets were vexed by daily brawls, as hot and as personal as of old between the Capulets and Montagues.

These dissensions, however, were pursued with not much personal risk to any of the Goethes, until a French army passed the Rhine as allies of the imperialists. One corps of this force took up their quarters in Frankfort; and the Comte Thorane, who held a high appointment on the staff, settled himself for a long period of time in the spacious mansion of Goethe's father. This officer, whom his place made responsible for the discipline of the army in relation to the citizens, was naturally by temper disposed to moderation and forbearance. He was indeed a favourable specimen of French military officers under the old system; well bred, not arrogant, well informed, and a friend of the fine arts. For painting, in particular, he professed great regard and some knowledge. The Goethes were able to forward his views amongst German artists; whilst, on the other hand, they were pleased to have thus an opportunity of directing his patronage towards some of their own needy connexions. In this exchange of good offices the two parties were for some time able to maintain a fair appearance of reciprocal good will. This on the Comte's side, if not particularly warm, was probably sincere; but in Goethe the father it was a mask for inveterate dislike. A natural ground of this existed in the original relations between them. Under what-

ever disguise or pretext, the Frenchman was in fact a military intruder: he occupied the best suite of rooms in the house, used the furniture as his own; and, though upon private motives he abstained from doing all the injury which his situation authorized (so as, in particular, to have spread his fine military maps upon the floor, rather than disfigure the decorated walls by nails), still he claimed credit, if not services of requital, for all such instances of forbearance. Here were grievances enough; but, in addition to these, the Comte's official appointments drew upon him a weight of daily business which kept the house in a continual uproar. Farewell to the quiet of a literary amateur, and the orderliness of a German household. Finally, the Comte was a Frenchman. These were too many assaults upon one man's patience. It will be readily understood, therefore, how it happened that, whilst Goethe's gentle-minded mother, with her flock of children,[1] continued to be on the best terms with Comte Thorane, the master of the house kept moodily aloof, and retreated from all intercourse.

Goethe, in his own Memoir, enters into large details upon this subject; and from him we shall borrow the *dénouement* of the tale. A crisis had for some time been lowering over the French affairs in Frankfort; things seemed ripening for a battle; and at last it came. Flight, siege, bombardment, possibly a storm, all danced before the eyes of the terrified citizens. Fortunately, however, the battle took place at the distance of four or five miles from Frankfort. Monsieur le Comte was absent, of course, on the field of battle. His unwilling host thought that on such an occasion he also might go out in quality of spectator; and with this purpose he connected another, worthy of a Parson Adams. It is his son who tells the story, whose filial duty was not proof against his sense of the ludicrous. The old gentleman's hatred of the French had by this time brought him over to his son's admiration of the Prussian hero. Not doubting for an instant that victory would follow that standard, he resolved on this day to offer in person his congratulations to the Prussian army, whom he already viewed

[1] Only two children survived infancy,—Goethe himself, and one sister.—M

as his liberator from a domestic nuisance. So purposing, he made his way cautiously to the suburbs; from the suburbs, still listening at each advance, he went forward to the country; totally forgetting, as his son insists, that, however completely beaten, the French army must still occupy some situation or other between himself and his German deliverer. Coming, however, at length to a heath, he found some of those marauders usually to be met with in the rear of armies, prowling about, and at intervals amusing themselves with shooting at a mark. For want of a better, it seemed not improbable that a large German head might answer their purpose: certain signs admonished him of this, and the old gentleman crept back to Frankfort. Not many hours after came back also the Comte. By no means creeping, however; on the contrary, crowing with all his might for a victory which he averred himself to have won. There had in fact been an affair, but on no very great scale, and with no distinguished results. Some prisoners, however, he brought, together with some wounded; and naturally he expected all well disposed persons to make their compliments of congratulation upon his triumph. Of this duty poor Mrs. Goethe and her children cheerfully acquitted themselves that same night; and Monsieur le Comte was so well pleased with the sound opinions of the little Goethes that he sent them in return a collection of sweetmeats and fruits. All promised to go well; intentions, after all, are not acts; and there certainly is not, nor ever was, any treason in taking a morning's walk. But, as ill luck would have it, just as Mr. Goethe was passing the Comte's door, out came the Comte in person, purely by accident, as we are told; but we suspect that the surly old German, either under his morning hopes or his evening disappointments, had talked with more frankness than prudence. "Good evening to you, Herr Goethe," said the Comte; "you are come, I see, to pay your tribute of congratulation. Somewhat of the latest, to be sure; but no matter." "By no means," replied the German; "by no means; *mit nichten.* Heartily I wished, the whole day long, that you and your cursed gang might all go to the devil together." Here was plain speaking, at least. The Comte Thorane could no longer complain of dissimulation. His

first movement was to order an arrest; and the official interpreter of the French army took to himself the whole credit that he did not carry it into effect. Goethe takes the trouble to report a dialogue, of length and dulness absolutely incredible, between this interpreter and the Comte. No such dialogue, we may be assured, ever took place. Goethe may, however, be right in supposing that, amongst a foreign soldiery, irritated by the pointed contrasts between the Frankfort treatment of their own wounded and of their prisoners who happened to be in the same circumstances, and under a military council not held to any rigorous responsibility, his father might have found no very favourable consideration of his case. It is well, therefore, that after some struggle the Comte's better nature triumphed. He suffered Mrs. Goethe's merits to outweigh her husband's delinquency, countermanded the order for arrest, and, during the remainder of their connexion, kept at such a distance from his moody host as was equally desirable for both. Fortunately that remainder was not very long. Comte Thorane was soon displaced, and the whole army was soon afterwards withdrawn from Frankfort.

In his fifteenth year Goethe was entangled in some connexion with young people of inferior rank, amongst whom was Margaret, a young girl about two years older than himself, and the object of his first love. The whole affair, as told by Goethe, is somewhat mysterious. What might be the final views of the elder parties it is difficult to say; but Goethe assures us that they used his services only in writing an occasional epithalamium, the pecuniary acknowledgment for which was spent jovially in a general banquet. The magistrates, however, interfered, and endeavoured to extort a confession from Goethe: he, as the son of a respectable family, was to be pardoned; the others to be punished. No confession, however, could be extorted; and for his own part he declares that, beyond the offence of forming a clandestine connexion, he had nothing to confess. The affair terminated, as regarded himself, in a severe illness. Of the others we hear no more.

The next event of importance in Goethe's life was his removal to college. His own wishes pointed to Göttingen,

but his father preferred Leipsic. Thither accordingly he went, but he carried his obedience no farther. Declining the study of jurisprudence, he attached himself to general literature. Subsequently he removed to the university of Strasbourg; but in neither place could it be said that he pursued any regular course of study. His health suffered at times during this period of his life; at first from an affection of the chest, caused by an accident on his first journey to Leipsic: the carriage had stuck fast in the muddy roads, and Goethe exerted himself too much in assisting to extricate the wheels. A second illness connected with the digestive organs brought him into considerable danger.

After his return to Frankfort, Goethe commenced his career as an author. In 1773, and the following year, he made his maiden essay in "Goetz of Berlichingen," a drama (the translation of which, remarkably enough, was destined to be the literary *coup d'essai* of Sir Walter Scott), and in the far-famed "Werther." The first of these was pirated; and in consequence the author found some difficulty in paying for the paper of the genuine edition, which part of the expense, by his contract with the publisher, fell upon himself. The general and early popularity of the second work is well known. Yet, except in so far as it might spread his name abroad, it cannot be supposed to have had much influence in attracting that potent patronage which now began to determine the course of his future life. So much we collect from the account which Goethe himself has left us of this affair in its earliest stages.

"I was sitting alone in my room," says he, "at my father's "house in Frankfort, when a gentleman entered, whom at "first I took for Frederick Jacobi, but soon discovered by the "dubious light to be a stranger. He had a military air; and "announcing himself by the name of Von Knebel, gave me "to understand, in a short explanation, that being in the "Prussian service, he had connected himself, during a long "residence at Berlin and Potsdam, with the literati of those "places; but that at present he held the appointment from the "court of Weimar of travelling tutor to the Prince Constantine. "This I heard with pleasure; for many of our friends had "brought us the most interesting accounts from Weimar, in

" particular that the Duchess Amelia, mother of the young
" Grand Duke and his brother, summoned to her assistance
" in educating her sons the most distinguished men in
" Germany, and that the university of Jena co-operated
" powerfully in all her liberal plans. I was aware also that
" Wieland was in high favour, and that the German Mercury
" (a literary journal of eminence) was itself highly creditable
" to the city of Jena, from which it issued. A beautiful and
" well-conducted theatre had besides, as I knew, been lately
" established at Weimar. This, it was true, had been de-
" stroyed ; but that event, under common circumstances so
" likely to be fatal as respected the present, had served only
" to call forth the general expression of confidence in the
" young prince as a restorer and upholder of all great interests,
" and true to his purposes under any calamity." Thinking
thus, and thus prepossessed in favour of Weimar, it was
natural that Goethe should be eager to see the prince.
Nothing was easier. It happened that he and his brother
Constantine were at this moment in Frankfort, and Von
Knebel willingly offered to present Goethe. No sooner said
than done; they repaired to the hotel, where they found the
illustrious travellers, with Count Goertz, the tutor of the
elder.

Upon this occasion an accident, rather than any previous
reputation of Goethe, was probably the determining occasion
which led to his favour with the future sovereign of Weimar.
A new book lay upon the table ; that none of the strangers
had read it Goethe inferred from observing that the leaves
were as yet uncut. It was a work of Moser ("*Patriotische
Phantasien*") ; and, being political rather than literary in its
topics, it presented to Goethe, previously acquainted with its
outline, an opportunity for conversing with the prince upon
subjects nearest to his heart, and of showing that he was not
himself a mere studious recluse. The opportunity was not
lost ; the prince and his tutor were much interested, and
perhaps a little surprised. Such subjects have the further
advantage, according to Goethe's own illustration, that, like
the Arabian thousand and one nights, as conducted by the
Sultana Scheherezade, "never ending, still beginning," they
rarely come to any absolute close, but so interweave one into

another as still to leave behind a large arrear of interest. In order to pursue the conversation, Goethe was invited to meet them soon after at Mentz. He kept the appointment punctually; made himself even more agreeable; and finally received a formal invitation to enter the service of this excellent prince, who was now beginning to collect around him all those persons who have since made Weimar so distinguished a name in connexion with the German literature. With some opposition from his father, who held up the rupture between Voltaire and Frederick of Prussia as a precedent applying to all possible connexions of princes and literati, Goethe accepted the invitation; and henceforwards, for upwards of fifty-five years, his fortunes were bound up with those of the ducal house of Weimar.

The noble part which that house played in the great modern drama of German politics is well known, and would have been better known had its power been greater. But the moral value of its sacrifices and its risks is not the less. Had greater potentates shown equal firmness, Germany would not have been laid at the feet of Napoleon. In 1806 the Grand Duke was aware of the peril which awaited the allies of Prussia; but neither his heart nor his conscience would allow of his deserting a friend in whose army he held a principal command. The decisive battle took place in his own territory, and not far from his own palace and city of Weimar. Personally he was with the Prussian army; but his excellent consort stayed in the palace to encourage her subjects, and as far as possible to conciliate the enemy by her presence. The fortune of that great day, the 14th of October 1806, was decided early; and the awful event was announced by a hot retreat and a murderous pursuit through the streets of the town. In the evening Napoleon arrived in person; and now came the trying moment. "The Duchess," says an Englishman well acquainted with Weimar and its court, "placed herself on the top of the staircase to greet him with the formality of a courtly reception. Napoleon started when he beheld her: '*Qui êtes vous?*' he exclaimed, with characteristic abruptness. '*Je suis la Duchesse de Weimar.*' '*Je vous plains,*' he retorted fiercely; '*j'écraserai votre mari.*' He then added, 'I shall dine in my apartment,' and rushed by

her. The night was spent on the part of the soldiery in all the horrid excesses of rapine. In the morning the Duchess sent to inquire concerning the health of his Majesty the Emperor, and to solicit an audience. He, who had now benefited by his dreams, or by his reflections, returned a gracious answer, and invited himself to breakfast with her in her apartment." In the conversation which ensued, Napoleon asked her if her husband were mad; upon which she justified the Duke by appealing to his own magnanimity, asking in her turn if his Majesty would have approved of his deserting the King of Prussia at the moment when he was attacked by so potent a monarch as himself. The rest of the conversation was in the same spirit, uniting with a sufficient concession to the circumstances of the moment a dignified vindication of a high-minded policy. Napoleon was deeply impressed with respect for her, and loudly expressed it. For her sake, indeed, he even affected to pardon her husband, thus making a merit with her of the necessity which he felt, from other motives, for showing forbearance towards a family so nearly allied to that of St. Petersburg. In 1813 the Grand Duke was found at his post in that great gathering of the nations which took place on the stupendous fields of Leipsic, and was complimented by the allied sovereigns as one of the most faithful amongst the faithful to the great cause, yet undecided, of national independence.

With respect to Goethe, as a councillor so near the Duke's person, it may be supposed that his presence was never wanting where it promised to be useful. In the earlier campaigns of the Duke Goethe was his companion; but in the final contest with Napoleon he was unequal to the fatigues of such a post. In all the functions of peace, however, he continued to be a useful servant to the last, though long released from all official duties. Each had indeed most honourably earned the gratitude of the other. Goethe had surrendered the flower of his years and the best energies of his mind to the service of his serene master. On the other hand, that master had to him been at once his Augustus and his Mecænas; such is his own expression. Under him he had founded a family, raised an estate, obtained titles and decorations from various courts; and in the very vigour of his life he had been

allowed to retire, with all the honours of long service, to the sanctuary of his own study, and to the cultivation of his leisure, as the very highest mode in which he could further the public interest.

The life of Goethe was so quiet and so uniform after the year 1775, when he may first be said to have entered into active life by taking service with the Duke of Weimar, that a biographer will find hardly any event to notice, except two journeys to Italy, and one campaign in 1792, until he draws near the close of his long career. It cannot interest an English reader to see the dates of his successive appointments. It is enough to know that they soon raised him to as high a station as was consistent with literary leisure, and that he had from the beginning enjoyed the unlimited confidence of his sovereign. Nothing remained, in fact, for the subject to desire which the prince had not previously volunteered. In 1825, they were able to look back upon a course of uninterrupted friendship, maintained through good and evil fortunes, unexampled in their agitation and interest, for fifty years. The Duke commemorated this remarkable event by a jubilee, and by a medal in honour of Goethe. Full of years and honour, this eminent man might now begin to think of his departure. However, his serenity continued unbroken nearly for two years more, when his illustrious patron died. That shock was the first which put his fortitude to trial. In 1830 others followed. The Duchess, who had won so much admiration from Napoleon, died ; then followed his own son ; and there remained little now to connect his wishes with the earth. The family of his patron he had lived to see flourishing in his descendants to the fourth generation. His own grandchildren were prosperous and happy. His intellectual labours were now accomplished. All that remained to wish for was a gentle dismission. This he found in the spring of 1832. After a six days' illness, which caused him no apparent suffering, on the morning of the 22d of March he breathed away as if into a gentle sleep, surrounded by his daughter-in-law and her children. Never was a death more in harmony with the life it closed. Both had the same character of deep and absolute serenity.

Such is the outline of Goethe's life, traced through its

principal events. But, as these events, after all, borrow their interest mainly from the consideration allowed to Goethe as an author, and as a model in the German literature,—*that* being the centre about which all secondary feelings of interest in the man must finally revolve,—it thus becomes a duty to throw a glance over his principal works. Dismissing his songs, to which has been ascribed by some critics a very high value for their variety and their lyrical enthusiasm; dismissing also a large body of short miscellaneous poems, suited to the occasional circumstances in which they arose; we may throw the capital works of Goethe into two classes—philosophic novels, and dramas.

The novels, which we call *philosophic* by way of expressing their main characteristic in being written to serve a preconceived purpose, or to embody some peculiar views of life, or some aspects of philosophic truth: are three, viz. the *Werthers Leiden;* secondly, the *Wilhelm Meister;* and, lastly, the *Wahlverwandschaften.* The first two exist in English translations; and, though the *Werther* had the disadvantage of coming to us through a French version, already, perhaps, somewhat coloured and distorted to meet the Parisian standards of sentiment, yet, as respects Goethe and his reputation amongst us, this wrong had been redressed, or compensated at least, by the good fortune of his *Wilhelm Meister*, in falling into the hands of a translator whose original genius qualified him for sympathizing even to excess with any real merits in that work.[1] This novel is in its own nature and purpose sufficiently obscure; and the commentaries which have been written upon it by the Humboldts, Schlegels, &c., make the enigma still more enigmatical. We shall not venture abroad upon an ocean of discussion so truly dark, and at the same time so illimitable. Whether it be qualified to excite any deep and *sincere* feeling of one kind or another in the German mind,—in a mind trained under German discipline,—this we will consent to waive as a question not immediately interesting to ourselves. Enough that it has

[1] Notable as an *amende honorable* by De Quincey, when he had come to know Carlyle personally, for his severe attack in the *London Magazine* for September 1824 on Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, then newly published.—M.

not gained, and will not gain, any attention in this country ; and this not only because it is thoroughly deficient in all points of attraction to readers formed upon our English literature, but because in some capital circumstances it is absolutely repulsive. We do not wish to offend the admirers of Goethe ; but the simplicity of truth will not allow us to conceal that in various points of description or illustration, and sometimes in the very outline of the story, the *Wilhelm Meister* is at open war, not with decorum and good taste merely, but with moral purity and the dignity of human nature. As a novelist, Goethe and his reputation are problems, and likely to continue such, to the countrymen of Mrs. Inchbald, Miss Harriet Lee, Miss Edgeworth, and Sir Walter Scott.

To the dramatic works of Goethe we are disposed to pay more homage, but neither in the absolute amount of our homage at all professing to approach his public admirers, nor to distribute the proportions of this homage amongst his several performances according to the graduations of *their* scale. The *Iphigenie* is built upon the old subject of Iphigenia in Tauris, as treated by Euripides and other Grecian dramatists ; and, if we are to believe a Schlegel, it is in beauty and effect a mere echo or reverberation from the finest strains of the old Grecian music. That it is somewhat nearer to the Greek model than a play after the fashion of Racine, we grant. Setting aside such faithful transcripts from the antique as the "Samson Agonistes," we might consent to view Goethe as that one amongst the moderns who had made the closest approximation to the Greek stage : *proximus*, we might say with Quintilian, but with him we must add "*sed longo intervallo*" ; and, if in the second rank, yet nearer to the third than to the first. Two other dramas, the *Clavigo* and the *Egmont*, fall below the *Iphigenie* by the very character of their pretensions : the first as too openly renouncing the grandeurs of the ideal ; the second as confessedly violating the historic truth of character without temptation to do so, and without any consequent indemnification. The *Tasso* has been supposed to realize an Italian beauty of genial warmth and of sunny repose ; but from the common defect of German criticism—the absence of all sufficient illustrations—it is as

difficult to understand the true nature and constituents of the supposed Italian standard set up for the regulation of our judgments as it is to measure the degree of approach made to that standard in this particular work. *Eugenie* is celebrated for the artificial burnish of the style, but otherwise has been little relished. It has the beauty of marble sculpture, say the critics of Goethe, but also the coldness. We are not often disposed to quarrel with these critics as *below* the truth in their praises; in this instance we are. The *Eugenie* is a fragment, or (as Goethe himself called it in conversation) a *torso*, being only the first drama in a trilogy or series of three dramas, each having a separate plot, whilst all are parts of a more general and comprehensive plan. It may be charged with languor in the movement of the action, and with excess of illustration. Thus, *e.g.*, the grief of the prince for the supposed death of his daughter, is the monotonous topic which occupies one entire act. But the situations, though not those of *scenical* distress, are so far from being unexciting that, on the contrary, they are too powerfully afflicting.

The lustre of all these performances, however, is eclipsed by the unrivalled celebrity amongst German critics of the *Faust*. Upon this it is better to say nothing than too little. How trifling an advance has been made towards clearing the ground for any sane criticism may be understood from this fact, that as yet no two people have agreed about the meaning of any separate scene, or about the drift of the whole. Neither is this explained by saying that until lately the *Faust* was a fragment; for no additional light has dawned upon the main question since the publication of the latter part.

One work there is of Goethe's which falls into neither of the classes here noticed; we mean the *Hermann and Dorothea*, a narrative poem, in hexameter verse. This appears to have given more pleasure to readers not critical than any other work of its author; and it is remarkable that it traverses humbler ground, as respects both its subject, its characters, and its scenery. From this, and other indications of the same kind, we are disposed to infer that Goethe mistook his destination; that his aspiring nature misled him; and that

his success would have been greater had he confined himself to the *real* in domestic life, without raising his eyes to the *ideal.*

We must also mention that Goethe threw out some novel speculations in physical science, and particularly in physiology, in the doctrine of colours, and in comparative anatomy, which have divided the opinions of critics even more than any of those questions which have arisen upon points more directly connected with his avowed character of poet.

It now remains to say a few words by way of summing up his pretensions as a man, and his intellectual power in the age to which he belonged. His rank and value as a moral being are so plain as to be legible to him who runs. Everybody must feel that his temperament and constitutional tendency was of that happy quality, the animal so nicely balanced with the intellectual, that with any ordinary measure of prosperity he could not be otherwise than a good man. He speaks himself of his own "virtue," *sans phrase*, and we tax him with no vanity in doing so. As a young man even at the universities, which at that time were barbarously sensual in Germany, he was (for so much we collect from his own Memoirs) eminently capable of self-restraint. He preserves a tone of gravity, of sincerity, of respect for female dignity, which we never find associated with the levity and recklessness of vice. We feel throughout the presence of one who, in respecting others, respects himself; and the cheerfulness of the presiding tone persuades us at once that the narrator is in a healthy moral condition, fears no ill, and is conscious of having meditated none. Yet, at the same time, we cannot disguise from ourselves that the moral temperament of Goethe was one which demanded prosperity: had he been called to face great afflictions, singular temptations, or a billowy and agitated course of life, our belief is that his nature would have been found unequal to the strife; he would have repeated the mixed and moody character of his father. Sunny prosperity was essential to his nature; his virtues were adapted to that condition. And happily that was his fate. He had no personal misfortunes; his path was joyous in this life; and even the reflex sorrow

from the calamities of his friends did not press too heavily on his sympathies ; none of these were in excess either as to degree or duration.

In this estimate of Goethe as a moral being few people will differ with us, unless it were the religious bigot. And to him we must concede thus much, that Goethe was not that religious creature which by nature he was intended to become. This is to be regretted. Goethe was naturally pious, and reverential towards higher natures ; and it was in the mere levity or wantonness of youthful power, partly also through that early false bias growing out of the Lisbon earthquake, that he falsified his original destination. Do we mean, then, that a childish error could permanently master his understanding ? No so ; *that* would have been corrected with his growing strength. But, having once arisen, it must for a long time have moulded his feelings ; *until* corrected, it must have impressed a corresponding false bias upon his practical way of viewing things ; and that sort of false bias, once established, might long survive a mere error of the understanding. One thing is undeniable. Goethe had so far corrupted and clouded his natural mind that he did not look up to God, or the system of things beyond the grave, with the interest of reverence and awe, but with the interest of curiosity

Goethe, however, in a moral estimate, will be viewed pretty uniformly. But Goethe intellectually, Goethe as a power acting upon the age in which he lived, that is another question. Let us put a case: suppose that Goethe's death had occurred fifty years ago, that is, in the year 1785, what would have been the general impression ? Would Europe have felt a shock ? Would Europe have been sensible even of the event ? Not at all: it would have been obscurely noticed in the newspapers of Germany, as the death of a novelist who had produced some effect about ten years before. In 1832, it was announced by the post-horns of all Europe as the death of him who had written the *Wilhelm Meister*, the *Iphigenie*, and the *Faust*, and who had been enthroned by some of his admirers on the same seat with Homer and Shakspere, as composing what they termed the *trinity of men of genius.* And yet it is a fact that, in the opinion of some amongst the acknowledged

leaders of our own literature for the last twenty-five years, the *Werther* was superior to all which followed it, and for mere power was the paramount work of Goethe. For ourselves, we must acknowledge our assent upon the whole to this verdict; and at the same time we will avow our belief that the reputation of Goethe must decline for the next generation or two, until it reaches its just level. Three causes, we are persuaded, have concurred to push it so far beyond the proportion of real and genuine interest attached to his works; for in Germany his works are little read, and in this country not at all. *First*, his extraordinary age; for the last twenty years Goethe had been the patriarch of the German literature: *secondly*, the splendour of his official rank at the court of Weimar; he was the minister and private friend of the patriot sovereign amongst the princes of Germany: *thirdly*, the quantity of enigmatical and unintelligible writing which he has designedly thrown into his latter works, by way of keeping up a system of discussion and strife upon his own meaning amongst the critics of his country. These disputes, had his meaning been of any value in his own eyes, he would naturally have settled by a few authoritative words from himself: but it was his policy to keep alive the feud in a case where it was of importance that his name should continue to agitate the world, but of none at all that he should be rightly interpreted.

SCHILLER[1]

John Christopher Frederick von Schiller was born at Marbach, a small town in the duchy of Wurtemberg, on the 10th day of November 1759. It will aid the reader in synchronizing the periods of this great man's life with the corresponding events throughout Christendom, if we direct his attention to the fact that Schiller's birth nearly coincided in point of time with that of Robert Burns, and that it preceded that of Napoleon by about ten years.

The position of Schiller is remarkable. In the land of his birth, by those who undervalue him the most, he is ranked as the second name in German literature; everywhere else he is ranked as the first. For us, who are aliens to Germany, Schiller is the representative of the German intellect in its highest form; and to him, at all events, whether first or second, it is certainly due that the German intellect has become a known power, and a power of growing magnitude, for the great commonwealth of Christendom. Luther and Kepler, potent intellects as they were, did not make themselves known as Germans; the revolutionary vigour of the one, the starry lustre of the other, blended with the convulsions of reformation, or with the aurora of ascending science, in too kindly and genial a tone to call off the attention from the work which they performed, from the service which they promoted, to the circumstances of their personal

[1] Contributed by De Quincey to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*—M.

position. Their country, their birth, their abode, even their separate existence, was merged in the mighty cause to which they lent their co-operation. And thus at the beginning of the sixteenth century, thus at the beginning of the seventeenth, did the Titan sons of Germany defeat their own private pretensions by the very grandeur of their merits. Their interest as patriots was lost and confounded in their paramount interest as cosmopolites. What they did for man and for human dignity eclipsed what they had designed for Germany. After them there was a long interlunar period of darkness for the land of the Rhine and the Danube. The German energy, too spasmodically excited, suffered a collapse. Throughout the whole of the seventeenth century but one vigorous mind arose for permanent effects in literature. This was Opitz,[1] a poet who deserves even yet to be read with attention, but who is no more worthy to be classed as the Dryden whom his too partial countrymen have styled him than the Germany of the Thirty Years' War of taking rank by the side of civilized and cultured England during the Cromwellian era, or Klopstock of sitting on the same throne with Milton. Leibnitz was the one sole potentate in the fields of intellect whom the Germany of this century produced[2]; and he, like Luther and Kepler, impresses us rather as a European than as a German mind, partly perhaps from his having pursued his self-development in foreign lands, partly from his large circle of foreign connexions, but most of all from his having written chiefly in French or in Latin. Passing onwards to the eighteenth century, we find, through its earlier half, an absolute wilderness, unreclaimed and without promise of natural vegetation, as the barren arena on which the few insipid writers of Germany paraded. The torpor of academic dulness domineered over the length and breadth of the land. And, as these academic bodies were universally found harnessed in the equipage of petty courts, it followed that the lethargies of pedantic dulness were uniformly deepened by the lethargies of aulic and ceremonial dulness; so that, if the reader represents to himself the very abstract of birthday odes, sycophantish dedications,

[1] Opitz, 1597-1639.—M. [2] Leibnitz, 1646-1716.—M.

and court sermons, he will have some adequate idea of the sterility and the mechanical formality which at that era spread the sleep of death over German literature. Literature, the very word literature, points the laughter of scorn to what passed under that name during the period of Gottsched. That such a man indeed as this Gottsched,[1] equal at the best to the composition of a Latin grammar or a school arithmetic, should for a moment have presided over the German muses, stands out as in itself a brief and significant memorial, too certain for contradiction, and yet almost too gross for belief, of the apoplectic sleep under which the mind of central Europe at that era lay oppressed. The rust of disuse had corroded the very principles of activity. And, as if the double night of academic dulness combined with the dulness of court inanities had not been sufficient for the stifling of all native energies, the feebleness of French models (and of these moreover naturalized through still feebler imitations) had become the law and standard for all attempts at original composition. The darkness of night, it is usually said, grows deeper as it approaches the dawn ; and the very enormity of that prostration under which the German intellect at this time groaned was the most certain pledge to any observing eye of that intense re-action soon to stir and kindle among the smouldering activities of this spell-bound people. This re-action, however, was not abrupt and theatrical : it moved through slow stages and by equable gradations : it might be said to commence from the middle of the eighteenth century,—that is, about nine years before the birth of Schiller ; but a progress of forty years had not carried it so far towards its meridian altitude as that the sympathetic shock from the French Revolution was by one fraction more rude and shattering than the public torpor still demanded. There is a memorable correspondency throughout all members of Protestant Christendom in whatsoever relates to literature and intellectual advance. However imperfect the organization which binds them together, it was sufficient even in those elder times to transmit reciprocally from one to every other so much of that illumination which could be gathered into books that no Christian state could be much

[1] Gottsched, 1700-1766.—M.

in advance of another, supposing that Popery opposed no barriers to free communication, unless only in those points which depended upon local gifts of nature, upon the genius of a particular people, or upon the excellence of its institutions. These advantages were incommunicable, let the freedom of intercourse have been what it might: England could not send off by posts or by heralds her iron and coals; she could not send the indomitable energy of her population; she could not send the absolute security of property; she could not send the good faith of her parliaments. These were gifts indigenous to herself, either through the temperament of her people, or through the original endowments of her soil. But her condition of moral sentiment, her high-toned civic elevation, her atmosphere of political feeling and popular boldness,—much of these she could and did transmit, by the radiation of the press, to the very extremities of the German Empire. Not only were our books translated, but it is notorious to those acquainted with German novels, or other pictures of German society, that as early as the Seven Years' War (1756-1763),—in fact, from the very era when Cave and Dr. Johnson first made the parliamentary debates accessible to the English themselves,—most of the German journals repeated, and sent forward as by telegraph, these senatorial displays to every village throughout Germany. From the polar latitudes to the Mediterranean, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Euxine, there was no other exhibition of free deliberative eloquence in any popular assembly. And the *Luise* of Voss alone,[1] a metrical idyll not less valued for its truth of portraiture than our own "Vicar of Wakefield," will show that the most sequestered clergyman of a rural parish did not think his breakfast equipage complete without the latest report from the great senate that sat in London. Hence we need not be astonished that German and English literature were found by the French Revolution in pretty nearly the same condition of semi-vigilance and imperfect animation. That mighty event reached us both, reached us all, we may say (speaking of Protestant states), at the same moment, by the same tremendous galvanism. The snake, the intellectual snake, that lay in ambush among all

[1] J. H. Voss, 1751-1826.—M.

nations, roused itself, sloughed itself, renewed its youth, in all of them at the same period. A new world opened upon us all; new revolutions of thought arose; new and nobler activities were born; "and other palms were won."

But by and through Schiller it was, as its main organ, that this great revolutionary impulse expressed itself. Already, as we have said, not less than forty years before the earthquake by which France exploded and projected the scoria of her huge crater over all Christian lands, a stirring had commenced among the dry bones of intellectual Germany; and symptoms arose that the breath of life would soon disturb, by nobler agitations than by petty personal quarrels, the death-like repose even of the German universities. Precisely in those bodies, however, it was,—in those as connected with tyrannical governments, each academic body being shackled to its own petty centre of local despotism,—that the old spells remained unlinked; and to them, equally remarkable as firm trustees of truth and as obstinate depositories of darkness or of superannuated prejudice, we must ascribe the slowness of the German movement on the path of reascent. Meantime the earliest torch-bearer to the murky literature of this great land, this crystallisation of political states, was Bodmer.[1] This man had no demoniac genius, such as the service required; but he had some taste, and, what was better, he had some sensibility. He lived among the Alps; and his reading lay among the alpine sublimities of Milton and Shakspere. Through his very eyes he imbibed a daily scorn of Gottsched and his monstrous compound of German coarseness with French sensual levity. He could not look at his native Alps but he saw in them, and their austere grandeurs or their dread realities, a spiritual reproach to the hollowness and falsehood of that dull imposture which Gottsched offered by way of substitute for nature. He was taught by the Alps to crave for something nobler and deeper. Bodmer, though far below such a function, rose by favour of circumstances into an apostle or missionary of truth for Germany. He translated passages of English literature. He inoculated with his own sympathies the more fervent mind of the youthful Klopstock,[2]

[1] Bodmer, 1698-1783.—M. [2] Klopstock, 1724-1803.—M.

who visited him in Switzerland. And it soon became evident that Germany was not dead, but sleeping; and once again, legibly for any eye, the pulses of life began to play freely through the vast organisation of central Europe.

Klopstock, however, though a fervid, a religious, and for that reason an anti-Gallican mind, was himself an abortion. Such at least is our own opinion of this poet. He was the child and creature of enthusiasm, but of enthusiasm not allied with a masculine intellect, or any organ for that capacious vision and meditative range which his subjects demanded. He was essentially thoughtless, betrays everywhere a most effeminate quality of sensibility, and is the sport of that pseudo-enthusiasm and baseless rapture which we see so often allied with the excitement of strong liquors. In taste, or the sense of proportions and congruences, or harmonious adaptations, he is perhaps the most defective writer extant.

But, if no patriarch of German literature, in the sense of having shaped the moulds in which it was to flow, in the sense of having disciplined its taste or excited its rivalship by classical models of excellence, or raised a finished standard of style, perhaps we must concede that, on a minor scale, Klopstock did something of that service in every one of these departments. His works were at least Miltonic in their choice of subjects, if ludicrously non-Miltonic in their treatment of those subjects. And, whether due to him or not, it is undeniable that in his time the mother-tongue of Germany revived, from the most absolute degradation on record, to its ancient purity. In the time of Gottsched, the authors of Germany wrote a macaronic jargon, in which French and Latin made up a considerable proportion of every sentence: nay, it happened often that foreign words were inflected with German forms; and the whole result was such as to remind the reader of the medical examination in the "Malade Imaginaire" of Molière:

> "Quid postea est à faire?
> Saignare,
> Baignare,
> Ensuita purgare," &c.

Now, it is reasonable to ascribe some share in the restoration

of good to Klopstock, both because his own writings exhibit nothing of this most abject euphuism (a euphuism expressing itself not in fantastic refinements on the staple of the language, but altogether in rejecting it for foreign words and idioms), and because he wrote expressly on the subject of style and composition.

Wieland,[1] meantime, if not enjoying so intense an acceptation as Klopstock, had a more extensive one ; and it is in vain to deny him the praise of a festive, brilliant, and most versatile wit. The Schlegels showed the haughty malignity of their ungenerous natures in depreciating Wieland, at a time when old age had laid a freezing hand upon the energy which he would once have put forth in defending himself. He was the Voltaire of Germany, and very much more than the Voltaire ; for his romantic and legendary poems are above the level of Voltaire. But, on the other hand, he was a Voltaire in sensual impurity. To work, to carry on a plot, to affect his readers by voluptuous impressions,—these were the unworthy aims of Wieland; and, though a good-natured critic would not refuse to make some allowance for a youthful poet's aberrations in this respect, yet the indulgence cannot extend itself to mature years. An old man corrupting his readers, attempting to corrupt them, or relying for his effect upon corruptions already effected in the purity of their affections, is a hideous object ; and that must be a precarious influence indeed which depends for its durability upon the licentiousness of men. Wieland, therefore, except in parts, will not last as a national idol ; but such he was nevertheless for a time.

Burger [2] wrote too little of any expansive compass to give the measure of his powers, or to found national impression ; Lichtenberg,[3] though a very sagacious observer, never rose into what can be called a *power*—he did not modify his age ; yet these were both men of extraordinary talent, and Burger a man of undoubted genius. On the other hand, Lessing [4] was merely a man of talent, but of talent in the highest degree adapted to popularity. His very defects, and the shallowness

[1] Wieland, 1733-1813.—M.
[2] Burger, 1748-1794.—M. [3] Lichtenberg, 1742-1799.—M.
[4] Lessing, 1729-1781.—M.

of his philosophy, promoted his popularity; and, by comparison with the French critics on the dramatic or scenical proprieties, he is even profound. His plummet, if not suited to the soundless depths of Shakspere, was able ten times over to fathom the little rivulets of Parisian philosophy. This he did effectually, and thus unconsciously levelled the paths for Shakspere, and for that supreme dominion which he has since held over the German stage, by crushing with his sarcastic shrewdness the pretensions of all who stood in the way. At that time, and even yet, the functions of a literary man were very important in Germany: the popular mind and the popular instinct pointed one way, those of the little courts another. Multitudes of little German states (many of which were absorbed since 1816 by the process of *mediatizing*) made it their ambition to play at keeping mimic armies in their pay, and to ape the greater military sovereigns by encouraging French literature only and the French language at their courts. It was this latter propensity which had generated the anomalous macaronic dialect of which we have already spoken as a characteristic circumstance in the social features of literary Germany during the first half of the eighteenth century. Nowhere else, within the records of human follies, do we find a corresponding case in which the government and the patrician orders in the state, taking for granted, and absolutely postulating, the utter worthlessness for intellectual aims of those in and by whom they maintained their own grandeur and independence, undisguisedly and even professedly sought to ally themselves with a foreign literature, foreign literati, and a foreign language. In this unexampled display of scorn for native resources, and the consequent collision between the two principles of action, all depended upon the people themselves. For a time the wicked and most profligate contempt of the local governments for that native merit which it was their duty to evoke and to cherish naturally enough produced its own justification. Like Jews or slaves, whom all the world have agreed to hold contemptible, the German literati found it hard to make head against so obstinate a prejudgment; and too often they became all that they were presumed to be. *Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.* And the con-

verse too often holds good—that, when all who should have smiled scowl upon a man, he turns out the abject thing they have predicted. Where Frenchified Fredericks sit upon German thrones, it should not surprise us to see a crop of Gottscheds arise as the best fruitage of the land. But, when there is any latent nobility in the popular mind, such scorn, by its very extremity, will call forth its own counteraction. It was perhaps good for Germany that a prince so eminent in one aspect as *Fritz der einziger* [1] should put on record so emphatically his intense conviction that no good thing could arise out of Germany. This creed was expressed by the quality of the French minds which he attracted to his court. The very refuse and dregs of the Parisian coteries satisfied his hunger for French garbage; the very offal of their shambles met the demand of his palate; even a Maupertuis,[2] so long as he could produce a French baptismal certificate, was good enough to manufacture into the president of a Berlin academy. Such scorn challenged a reaction: the contest lay between the thrones of Germany and the popular intellect, and the final result was inevitable. Once aware that they were insulted, once enlightened to the full consciousness of the scorn which trampled on them as intellectual and predestined Helots, even the mild-tempered Germans became fierce, and now began to aspire, not merely under the ordinary instincts of personal ambition, but with a vindictive feeling, and as conscious agents of retribution. It became a pleasure with the German author that the very same works which elevated himself wreaked his nation upon their princes, and poured retorted scorn upon their most ungenerous and unparental sovereigns. Already, in the reign of the martial Frederick, the men who put most weight of authority into his contempt of Germans,—Euler, the matchless Euler, Lambert, and Immanuel Kant,—had vindicated the pre-eminence of German mathematics.[3] Already, in 1755, had the same Immanuel Kant, whilst yet a probationer for the chair of

[1] "*Freddy the unique*"; which is the name by which the Prussians expressed their admiration of their martial and indomitable, though somewhat fantastic, king.

[2] Maupertuis, 1698-1759.—M.

[3] Euler, 1707-1783; Lambert, 1728-1777; Kant, 1724-1804.—M.

logic in a Prussian university, sketched the outline of that philosophy which has secured the admiration, though not the assent, of all men known and proved to have understood it, of all men able to state its doctrines in terms admissible by its disciples. Already, and even previously, had Haller,[1] who wrote in German, placed himself at the head of the current physiology. And in the fields of science or of philosophy the victory was already decided for the German intellect in competition with the French.

But the fields of literature were still comparatively barren. Klopstock was at best an anomaly; Lessing did not present himself in the impassioned walks of literature; Herder was viewed too much in the exclusive and professional light of a clergyman; and, with the exception of John Paul Richter, a man of most original genius, but quite unfitted for general popularity,[2] no commanding mind arose in Germany with powers for levying homage from foreign nations until the appearance, as a great scenical poet, of Frederick Schiller.

The father of this great poet was Caspar Schiller, an officer in the military service of the Duke of Würtemberg. He had previously served as a surgeon in the Bavarian army; but, on his final return to his native country of Würtemberg, and to the service of his native prince, he laid aside his medical character for ever, and obtained a commission as ensign and adjutant. In 1763 the peace of Paris threw him out of his military employment, with the nominal rank of captain. But, having conciliated the Duke's favour, he was still borne on the books of the ducal establishment; and, as a planner of ornamental gardens, or in some other civil capacity, he continued to serve His Serene Highness for the rest of his life.

The parents of Schiller were both pious, upright persons, with that loyal fidelity to duty, and that humble simplicity of demeanour towards their superiors, which is so often found among the unpretending natives of Germany. It is probable, however, that Schiller owed to his mother exclusively the preternatural endowments of his intellect. She was of humble origin, the daughter of a baker, and not so fortunate as to have received much education. But she was apparently

[1] Haller, 1708-1777.—M. [2] Richter, 1763-1825.

rich in gifts of the heart and the understanding. She read poetry with delight; and, through the profound filial love with which she had inspired her son, she found it easy to communicate her own literary tastes. Her husband was not illiterate, and had in mature life so laudably applied himself to the improvement of his own defective knowledge that at length he thought himself capable of appearing before the public as an author. His book related simply to the subjects of his professional experience as a horticulturist, and was entitled *Die Baumzucht im Grossen* (On the Management of Forests). Some merit we must suppose it to have had, since the public called for a second edition of it long after his own death, and even after that of his illustrious son. And, although he was a plain man, of no pretensions, and possibly even of slow faculties, he has left behind him a prayer in which there is one petition of sublime and pathetic piety, worthy to be remembered by the side of Agar's wise prayer against the almost equal temptations of poverty and riches. At the birth of his son, he had been reflecting with sorrowful anxiety, not unmingled with self-reproach, on his own many disqualifications for conducting the education of the child. But at length, reading in his own manifold imperfections but so many reiterations of the necessity that he should rely upon God's bounty, converting his very defects into so many arguments of hope and confidence in heaven, he prayed thus:—"Oh God, that knowest my poverty in good gifts for " my son's inheritance, graciously permit that, even as the " want of bread became to thy Son's hunger-stricken flock " in the wilderness the pledge of overflowing abundance, so " likewise my darkness may, in its sad extremity, carry with " it the measure of thy unfathomable light; and, because I, " thy worm, cannot give to my son the least of blessings, do " thou give the greatest; because in my hands there is not " anything, do thou from thine pour out all things; and " that temple of a new-born spirit, which I cannot adorn " even with earthly ornaments of dust and ashes, do thou " irradiate with the celestial adornment of thy presence, and " finally with that peace that passeth all understanding."

Reared at the feet of parents so pious and affectionate, Schiller would doubtless pass a happy childhood; and prob-

ably to this utter tranquillity of his earlier years, to his seclusion from all that could create pain, or even anxiety, we must ascribe the unusual dearth of anecdotes from this period of his life,—a dearth which has tempted some of his biographers into improving and embellishing some puerile stories, which a man of sense will inevitably reject as too trivial for his gravity or too fantastical for his faith. That nation is happy, according to a common adage, which furnishes little business to the historian; for such a vacuity in facts argues a condition of perfect peace and silent prosperity. That childhood is happy, or may generally be presumed such, which has furnished few records of external experience, little that has appeared in doing or in suffering to the eyes of companions; for the child who has been made happy by early thoughtfulness, and by infantine struggles with the great ideas of his origin and his destination (ideas which settle with a deep, dove-like brooding upon the mind of childhood, more than of mature life, vexed with inroads from the noisy world), will not manifest the workings of his spirit by much of external activity. The *fallentis semita vitæ*, that path of noiseless life which eludes and deceives the conscious notice both of its subject and of all around him, opens equally to the man and to the child; and the happiest of all childhoods will have been that of which the happiness has survived and expressed itself, not in distinct records, but in deep affection, in abiding love, and the hauntings of meditative power.

Such a childhood, in the bosom of maternal tenderness, was probably passed by Schiller; and his first awaking to the world of strife and perplexity happened in his fourteenth year. Up to that year his life had been vagrant, agreeably to the shifting necessities of the ducal service, and his education desultory and domestic. But in the year 1773 he was solemnly entered as a member of a new academical institution, founded by the reigning duke, and recently translated to his little capital of Stuttgard. This change took place at the special request of the Duke, who, under the mask of patronage, took upon himself the severe control of the whole simple family. The parents were probably both too humble and dutiful in spirit, towards one whom they regarded in the double light of sovereign lord and of personal benefactor,

ever to murmur at the ducal behests, far less to resist them. The Duke was for them an earthly providence; and they resigned themselves, together with their child, to the disposal of him who dispensed their earthly blessings, not less meekly than of Him whose vicegerent they presumed him to be. In such a frame of mind, requests are but another name for commands; and thus it happened that a second change arose upon the first, even more determinately fatal to the young Schiller's happiness. Hitherto he had cherished a day-dream pointing to the pastoral office in some rural district, as that which would harmonize best with his intellectual purposes, with his love of quiet, and, by means of its preparatory requirements, best also with his own peculiar choice of studies. But this scheme he now found himself compelled to sacrifice; and the two evils which fell upon him concurrently in his new situation were, first, the formal military discipline and monotonous routine of duty, secondly, the uncongenial direction of the studies, which were shaped entirely to the attainment of legal knowledge and the narrow service of the local tribunals. So illiberal and so exclusive a system of education was revolting to the expansive mind of Schiller; and the military bondage under which this system was enforced shocked the aspiring nobility of his moral nature, not less than the technical narrowness of the studies shocked his understanding. In point of expense, the whole establishment cost nothing at all to those parents who were privileged servants of the Duke: in this number were the parents of Schiller, and that single consideration weighed too powerfully upon his filial piety to allow of his openly murmuring at his lot; while on *their* part the parents were equally shy of encouraging a disgust which too obviously tended to defeat the promises of ducal favour. This system of monotonous confinement was therefore carried to its completion, and the murmurs of the young Schiller were either dutifully suppressed, or found vent only in secret letters to a friend. In one point only Schiller was able to improve his condition. Jointly with the juristic department was another for training young aspirants to the medical profession. To this, as promising a more enlarged scheme of study, Schiller, by permission, transferred himself in 1775.

But, whatever relief he might find in the nature of his new studies, he found none at all in the system of personal discipline which prevailed.

Under the oppression of this detested system, and by pure reaction against its wearing persecutions, we learn from Schiller himself that in his nineteenth year he undertook the earliest of his surviving plays, *The Robbers*, beyond doubt the most tempestuous, the most volcanic we might say, of all juvenile creations anywhere recorded. He himself calls it "a monster," and a monster it is; but a monster which has never failed to convulse the heart of young readers with the temperament of intellectual enthusiasm and sensibility. True it is, and nobody was more aware of that fact than Schiller himself in after years, the characters of the three Moors, father and sons, are mere impossibilities; and some readers, in whom the judicious acquaintance with human life in its realities has outrun the sensibilities, are so much shocked by these hypernatural phenomena that they are incapable of enjoying the terrific sublimities which on that basis of the visionary do really exist. A poet, perhaps Schiller might have alleged, is entitled to assume hypothetically so much in the previous positions or circumstances of his agents as is requisite to the basis from which he starts. It is undeniable that Shakspere and others have availed themselves of this principle, and with memorable success. Shakspere, for instance, *postulates* his witches, his Caliban, his Ariel: grant, he virtually says, such modes of spiritual existence or of spiritual relations as a possibility; do not expect me to demonstrate this, and upon that single concession I will rear a superstructure that shall be self-consistent; everything shall be *internally* coherent and reconciled, whatever be its *external* relations as to our human experience. But this species of assumption, on the largest scale, is more within the limits of credibility and plausible verisimilitude when applied to modes of existence which, after all, are in such total darkness to us (the limits of the possible being so undefined and shadowy as to what can or cannot exist), than the very slightest liberties taken with human character, or with those principles of action, motives, and feelings, upon which men would move under given circumstances, or with the modes of

action which in common prudence they would be likely to adopt. The truth is that, as a coherent work of art, the *Robbers* is indefensible; but, however monstrous it may be pronounced, it possesses a power to agitate and convulse, which will always obliterate its great faults to the young, and to all whose judgment is not too much developed. And the best apology for Schiller is found in his own words in recording the circumstances and causes under which this anomalous production arose. "To escape," says he, "from the formali-"ties of a discipline which was odious to my heart, I sought "a retreat in the world of ideas and shadowy possibilities, "while as yet I knew nothing at all of that human world "from which I was harshly secluded by iron bars. Of men, "the actual men in this world below, I knew absolutely "nothing at the time when I composed my *Robbers*. Four "hundred human beings, it is true, were my fellow-prisoners "in this abode; but they were mere tautologies and reitera-"tions of the self-same mechanic creature, and like so many "plaster casts from the same original statue. Thus situated, "of necessity I failed. In making the attempt, my chisel "brought out a monster, of which (and that was fortunate) "the world had no type or resemblance to show."

Meantime this demoniac drama produced very opposite results to Schiller's reputation. Among the young men of Germany it was received with an enthusiasm absolutely unparalleled, though it is perfectly untrue that it excited some persons of rank and splendid expectations (as a current fable asserted) to imitate Charles Moor in becoming robbers. On the other hand, the play was of too powerful a cast not in any case to have alarmed his serenity the Duke of Wurtemberg; for it argued a most revolutionary mind, and the utmost audacity of self-will. But, besides this general ground of censure, there arose a special one, in a quarter so remote that this one fact may serve to evidence the extent as well as intensity of the impression made. The territory of the Grisons had been called by Spiegelberg, one of the robbers, "the Thief's Athens." Upon this the magistrates of that country presented a complaint to the Duke; and his Highness, having cited Schiller to his presence, and severely reprimanded him, issued a decree that this dangerous young

student should henceforth confine himself to his medical studies.

The persecution which followed exhibits such extraordinary exertions of despotism, even for that land of irresponsible power, that we must presume the Duke to have relied more upon the hold which he had upon Schiller through his affection for parents so absolutely dependent on his Highness's power than upon any laws, good or bad, which he could have pleaded as his warrant. Germany, however, thought otherwise of the new tragedy than the serene critic of Würtemberg: it was performed with vast applause at the neighbouring city of Mannheim; and thither, under a most excusable interest in his own play, the young poet clandestinely went. On his return he was placed under arrest. And soon afterwards, being now thoroughly disgusted, and, with some reason, alarmed by the tyranny of the Duke, Schiller finally eloped to Mannheim, availing himself of the confusion created in Stuttgard by the visit of a foreign prince.

At Mannheim he lived in the house of Dalberg, a man of some rank and of sounding titles, but in Mannheim known chiefly as the literary manager (or what is called director) of the theatre. This connexion aided in determining the subsequent direction of Schiller's talents; and his *Fiesco*, his *Intrigue and Love*, his *Don Carlos*, and his *Maria Stuart*, followed within a short period of years. None of these are so far free from the faults of the *Robbers* as to merit a separate notice; for, with less power, they are almost equally licentious. Finally, however, he brought out his *Wallenstein*, an immortal drama, and, beyond all competition, the nearest in point of excellence to the dramas of Shakspere. The position of the characters of Max. Piccolomini and the Princess Thekla is the finest instance of what, in a critical sense, is called *relief*, that literature offers. Young, innocent, unfortunate, among a camp of ambitious, guilty, and blood-stained men, they offer a depth and solemnity of impression which is equally required by way of contrast and of final repose.

From Mannheim, where he had a transient love affair with Laura Dalberg, the daughter of his friend the director, Schiller removed to Jena, the celebrated university in the territory of Weimar. The Grand Duke of that German

Florence was at this time gathering around him the most eminent of the German intellects; and he was eager to enrol Schiller in the body of his professors. In 1799 Schiller received the chair of civil history; and not long after he married Miss Lengefeld, with whom he had been for some time acquainted. In 1803 he was ennobled; that is, he was raised to the rank of gentleman, and entitled to attach the prefix of *Von* to his name. His income was now sufficient for domestic comfort and respectable independence; while in the society of Goethe, Herder, and other eminent wits, he found even more relaxation for his intellect than his intellect, so fervent and so self-sustained, could require.

Meantime the health of Schiller was gradually undermined. His lungs had been long subject to attacks of disease; and the warning indications which constantly arose of some deep-seated organic injuries in his pulmonary system ought to have put him on his guard for some years before his death. Of all men, however, it is remarkable that Schiller was the most criminally negligent of his health; remarkable, we say, because for a period of four years Schiller had applied himself seriously to the study of medicine. The strong coffee and the wine which he drank may not have been so injurious as his biographers suppose; but his habit of sitting up through the night, and defrauding his wasted frame of all natural and restorative sleep, had something in it of that guilt which belongs to suicide. On the 9th of May 1805 his complaint reached its crisis. Early in the morning he became delirious; at noon his delirium abated; and at four in the afternoon he fell into a gentle unagitated sleep, from which he soon awoke. Conscious that he now stood on the very edge of the grave, he calmly and fervently took a last farewell of his friends. At six in the evening he fell again into sleep; from which, however, he again awoke once more, to utter the memorable declaration "that many things were growing plain and clear to his understanding." After this the cloud of sleep again settled upon him, a sleep which soon changed into the cloud of death.

This event produced a profound impression throughout Germany. The theatres were closed at Weimar, and the funeral was conducted with public honours. The position in

point of time, and the peculiar services of Schiller to the German literature, we have already stated: it remains to add that in person he was tall, and of a strong, bony structure, but not muscular, and strikingly lean. His forehead was lofty, his nose aquiline, and his mouth almost of Grecian beauty. With other good points about his face, and with auburn hair, it may be presumed that his whole appearance was pleasing and impressive, while in later years the character of sadness and contemplative sensibility deepened the impression of his countenance. We have said enough of his intellectual merit; which places him, in our judgment, at the head of the Trans-Rhenish literature. But we add, in concluding, that Frederick von Schiller was something more than a great author; he was also in an eminent sense a great man; and his works are not more worthy of being studied for their singular force and originality than his moral character for its nobility and aspiring grandeur.

END OF VOL. IV

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